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The Lowager

Lady Humour

1830

First Love

by Mrs Sheridan

in three Volumes



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F I R S T L O V E.

A NOVEL.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

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1830.

GUNNELL AND SHEARMAN, SALISBURY SQUARE.

FIRST LOVE.

CHAPTER I.

“ Then sweetly in seraphic strain returns,
From ev’ry farthest arch, and highest cell.”

DURING the day, Lord Borrowdale’s attentions to Julia were public and unremitting, while the infatuated, unhappy Edmund witnessed it all in growing sorrow of heart. Had he then, he asked himself, already yielded to a passion so irrational, so dishonourable?—No. He was not quite so mad—quite so base. Had he not always loved Julia? loved her when she

was a child—when there could be nothing questionable in the nature of his attachment?—Certainly he had, sincerely, fondly loved her.

Julia, too, in the course of the day, felt a little uncomfortable; she thought that, notwithstanding the friendly conversation of the morning, Edmund, some how, did not seem satisfied. He was not cheerful, he was not frank and obliging as usual; he was not, in short, the least like himself! Could it be, that he fancied he had been but coolly received on his return? Frances and herself used always to make such rejoicing when he came home; but that was when they were children. And yesterday, there was such a hurry with company—yet, possibly, Edmund might have thought it proceeded from silly pride, because there were strangers by, or some such worthless feel-

ing ! She longed for an opportunity of speaking to him kindly on the subject, and doing away with such an idea, if indeed it existed. But he now rather seemed to avoid her, while Lady Susan always happened to be speaking to him just when she was intending to do so.

At dinner, Lord Borrowdale handed in Julia; for Lord Morven appeared to think it necessary to resign in his favour. Not so Henry, who not only secured the place on the other side of our heroine, but contrived to engross much of her conversation. This was but poor consolation to Edmund ; it argued indifference to Lord Borrowdale, certainly ; but then Henry, though without title, was at least nearly her equal in birth, being her own cousin. And it was possible—barely possible, that she might be attached to him : he had been at home once or twice when it had not been in Edmund's power to

return. His observations this morning might have been prompted by jealousy.

After dinner preparations were made for a sail on the lake. Edmund observed Lord Borrowdale, from the moment they left the house, eagerly secure to himself the care of Julia. He, however, walked on the other side. But Lady Susan, passing them as they arrived at the place of embarkation, ran on the gang-board alone; then, stopping half way in alarm, and balancing herself with difficulty, yet refusing the aid of the bargemen, she called on Captain Montgomery for his assistance, declaring he was the only person who understood boats, and that she should not consider herself safe in any other hands. The gallant Captain could not disobey the summons, nor, having obeyed it, avoid continuing his especial protection to the lady; while Henry coming up

at the moment, drew Julia's arm over his with all the freedom of cousinship. The boats, after crossing the lake, coasted along beneath the shade of trees, which hung from the steep rocks almost into the water, while the bare mountain tops, towering far above, were canopied by the heavens, and again reflected in the clear lake, where yet another sky appeared as far beneath.

“This—this is the spot!” exclaimed Mr. Jackson, “to try the effect of the echoes.” They had arrived, as he spoke, opposite the opening to a little valley. A chain of stupendous mountains arose on either side, and one of a conical form, partly shrouded in a white mist which had rolled up from the lake, terminated the far perspective.

The rowers lay on their oars, and the French-horns commenced an air. Immedi-

ately, a gigantic voice from within the steep side of the nearest mountain took it up ; the next joined in, and the next ; but each less loud, till the receding echoes, in journeying round the lake, reached rugged Borrowdale : there they seemed broken off for some seconds ; but soon a distant clamour arose, as proceeding from the thousand mountain tops of that desolate region : the sounds were flung further and nearer, then succeeded each other more rapidly, then became slower in their repeats. At length they came forth again, and continued travelling round the lake on the opposite side ; but now, increasing in loudness as they once more approached the boats, and loudest when they reached the mountain which formed the second portal to the little valley already described, and in front of the opening to which the boats still lay. Then fainter, and fainter

notes proceeded up the vale, and, at length, at its furthest extremity, died away altogether.

After a pause of perfect silence, to ascertain that no return of the echoes could be expected, Julia was eagerly called upon to sing. She asked Edmund to join her in the echo duet, and smiled as she spoke to him. Half his unhappiness vanished in a moment, and the song commenced. The tones of Edmund's voice were full and firm. His singing, however, derived its principal charm from his manner, which had in it so much of truth and nature, that you could almost fancy him one addressing you with no object but to persuade by the purport of his words; while the mere inflexions of the voice, in sympathising with that purport, unconsciously formed themselves into varied and melodious harmonies.

As for Julia's voice, it chanced to be one of those wonders, rare as the blow of the aloe ! Cultivation had, of course, not been spared ; but it was its native power and unexampled compass which were so remarkable. Its variety of capabilities too delighted, for in soft or playful passages, its tones had, as we have somewhere remarked, an almost infantine sweetness. On the present occasion, the scenery, the music, the effect of the echoes, all were inspirations ; and the notes which escaped from her lips, gradually arose, till imagination could fancy them travelling on above the clouds, and the listeners felt an involuntary impulse to look upwards, as in pursuit of them. Then, as the air varied, the voice would suddenly fall full and plump on the truest and richest harmonies below, while the higher tones were repeated far above by now receding, now ap-

proaching echoes. Soon did the whole wild region round about seem peopled by invisible beings ; wandering voices called from every pointed crag of every mountain top ; while the steep-sided rock, near which the boat still lay, appeared to contain some dark enchanter, who, all the time in hurried and mysterious accents, spoke from within. Even every little tufted island seemed to have its own, one, wild inhabitant ; for each, from some projecting point or hidden bower, sent forth a voice, however faint in its tone or inarticulate in its utterance. Julia's enthusiasm arose so high, that she not only exerted every power of her extraordinary voice, but, when she had concluded, forgetting how considerable a part she had borne in the general concert, she cried, "Beautiful ! beautiful !" in absolute extacy at the echoes.

"Beautiful ! beautiful !" exclaimed Edmund

at the same moment, meaning, probably, Julia's singing, but certainly not his own.

"Beautiful ! beautiful !" repeated the voice of thunder from within the adjacent perpendicular rock.

"Beautiful ! beautiful !" ran along the invisible orchestra above. Frances could keep her countenance no longer at the self-gratulations of the performers, visible and invisible ; she laughed out, and a merry peal from all the echoes followed immediately.

"This is too bad," cried Mr. Jackson, starting, (to the great endangering of the boat,) from the attitude of delighted attention in which he had, since the commencement of the song, remained motionless, "this is too bad, to break up the delicious spell with such a farce as this !"

The sun was now near setting : a homeward course was therefore proposed ; and

the breeze being favourable, a sail was spread, which, not only greatly assisted the rowers, but added much to the picturesque appearance of the gay barge in which our party sat, as, quitting its coasting position, it dipped like a white winged sea-bird into the dark bosom of the lake, and crossed to the Keswick side.

When they were about to land, Edmund paused a moment to consider whether he ought not to leave Julia to the care of Lord Borrowdale ; but she happened at the moment, to point out a well remembered landing-place, beneath an overhanging bower of branches, reminding him how often he had rowed Frances and herself to the spot, and remarking further, a little path, sometimes discernible, among the trees in which they used to walk. Such are the important events which change the resolves of lovers ! He gave up all thoughts of the

sacrifice he had meditated ; hastened to assist her out of the boat ; and, as she stepped on the beach, drew the hand he held over his arm, and walked on unconscious of an accident which followed immediately, and which we shall here describe. The hold of the boat-hook on the roots of a stump giving way, the boat was sent, for a few moments, a-drift ; and not only was the bargeman, who stood with one foot on the edge of the boat and the other on a projecting piece of rock, precipitated into the water, but so also was Lord Borrowdale, who was, at the instant, in the very act of leaping ashore to join our heroine. This caused such immoderate laughing among the rest of the gentlemen, and so much pretty terror among the ladies, that Edmund and Julia were not missed till they became quite separated from the party. A most inviting path lay before them, which, after

ascending for a time, descended a steep and wooded slope, to an overarched opening through the trees, just where a single plank crossed a little stream, at a considerable height from the water.

Arrived on this rustic bridge they stood, the beauty of the scene suspending the hand of Edmund, which he had laid on a little paling gate at its further extremity, with the purpose of opening it, as it formed the barrier between our wanderers and a fresh cut hay-field.

The sun was so low in the horizon that the little mounds of grass which every hand was hastily throwing up for the night at the far end of the meadow, cast their lengthened shadows across half its extent, while the setting beam was still bronzing their tops, together with the faces, garments, and implements of the rustic groups employed around

them. At the same moment a full moon, just rising to view on the opposite verge of the heavens, was glittering through the branches of some dark firs that terminated the prospect in that direction.

Julia, who had several appropriate speeches ready, had been all day only waiting for an opportunity to say them ; for she had reasoned herself into a belief that it would be dreadful to let Edmund think himself neglected for newer or gayer objects ; but, some how, all this preparation had made a thing so simple in itself, as joking Edmund for being affronted, seem quite awful ; and in consequence, her heart was beating so fast, that she was waiting for it to stop before she could begin to speak.

“ Edmund,” she at length contrived to say, turning and offering her hand ; but the foolish fluttering of her heart redoubled, and she

stopped short. Edmund started, caught the offered hand, and, puzzled and delighted, pressed it to his lips. She laughed, blushed, and drew her hand away, saying—

“I see, Edmund, you are silly enough to be quite jealous.”

This was rather an unfortunate choice of expression ; for Edmund, colouring to excess, began to stammer out—“I—me—oh—a, I have a—I—”

“I dare say you think,” continued Julia, who had no suspicion of the kind of jealousy, which on mention of the word, had presented itself to Edmund’s fancy—“I dare say you think we did not appear as glad to see you as usual, when you arrived so by surprise yesterday ; but you came in in so hurried a manner—and—among so many strangers—that—that—”

“Indeed, Julia, I—you—” again stammered Edmund.

“I am sure none of us intended to be unkind,” continued Julia, “—or less glad, I mean, of your safe return.”

“You are too good to be unkind to any one, Julia,” said Edmund, with a sigh. Julia still fancying his manner seemed strangely dissatisfied, began to feel offended in her turn, and a rather awkward pause followed. At length, she compelled herself to make another effort, and said, with a reasoning tone—

“You cannot suppose, Edmund, that any of your friends at Lodore regard you less, merely from your having been a few years from home! Indeed, if you could know how highly, both grandmamma and Mr. Jackson always speak of you, you would not think so!” He made no

reply ; for it was neither grandmamma nor Mr. Jackson that he was thinking of.

“ I believe,” she added, trying to laugh, really was all I had heard about ‘ Captain Montgomery, the gallant Captain Montgomery !’ which made me find it so difficult to imagine Edmund, who used to play with Frances and myself here in these woods, and the said terrible Captain fighting the French and destroying the Turks on the high seas, one and the same person !”

“ Ungentle employment, it must be confessed !” he replied, with a faint smile.

“ Oh—I don’t mean that,” said Julia, “ I—But really, Edmund, I think,” she added, gravely, “ I have made you apologies enough to restore any reasonable being to good humour.”

“ You make me apologies !” he commenced :

but Julia, as she turned from him, with something of indignation at his supposed obstinacy, forgetting the narrow plank on which she stood, slipped her foot, and would certainly have fallen into the water had he not caught her in his arms, and lifted her to sure footing. Julia, partly from alarm, and partly from the previous exertion of her spirits in saying so much, was a good deal overcome, and even shed tears. The sight of these threw Edmund off his guard. “Would to heaven, Julia !” he exclaimed, “that I were indeed your brother ! entitled to the happy privilege of guarding one more precious than life from every danger ! of sheltering one dearer than happiness itself—from every sorrow !”

Thunderstruck at his own rashness, he ceased. A smile through her tears was Julia’s reply ; for, as she was not expecting, or think-

ing of a love speech, she understood from what had been said, only that friendship and good humour were restored, and Edmund become more like himself. A long silence, however, followed : when Julia at last said, in rather a hesitating manner, and at the same time with an effort at playfulness, “ Frances and I have always called you brother, you know, can you not fancy yourself such, and take as good care of us as if you were really our brother ? ”

This was a trying appeal ; and the beating of Edmund’s heart, (closer to which he imperceptibly drew Julia’s arm as she spoke) shewed him that he must not trust himself with the use of language. Another silence, therefore, followed, and they walked slowly on. In a little time, Edmund, as if thinking aloud, gave, perhaps, unconscious utterance to what seemed to be the result of his meditations, saying :

“ No, no !—it cannot be required of me, to root out the permitted affections of childhood from my heart !—It were too impossible !—too unnatural !”

“ And who wishes you to do so ?” asked his companion, with a quickness that shewed how little she understood his feelings.

At this moment, the rest of the party came in sight at some distance ; and Edmund, as if fearful of interruption, turned suddenly round, and, in hurried and agitated accents, said, “ Julia ! you permit me to feel for you the affection of a brother ! you permit me, you say, to evince that feeling by care of your welfare, your safety, your happiness. Should I ever be so unfortunate as to extend to what may seem presumption on your goodness, the dear, the sacred privilege—check—but do not, do not utterly condemn me !”

He paused a moment for breath, then, with effort, recommenced thus: "Your family is the home of all my affections! Could it be—should it be otherwise? Yet, in cherishing those affections, so natural, in my circumstances, so inextinguishable, there may occur moments when I may be tempted to forget that I myself stand alone, must ever stand alone, an unconnected, a nameless stranger!"

Here the joining of the party as they came up, laughing and recounting Lord Borrowdale's adventure, put an end to this dangerous conference. Its results, however, coloured the future destinies of both the young people. If Edmund had previously formed safer resolves, they were now lost in the belief that Julia was in no danger of discovering in him, or sharing herself any sentiments, exceeding the bounds of that friendship which it was, (under the cir-

cumstance,) but right and natural should subsist between them ; while any deficiency (he argued with himself) in the manifestation of brotherly regard on his part, would require the very explanation it was his duty not to make. He must, therefore, shew her every silent, unpretending, affectionate attention ; every mark of brotherly regard ; while his own imprudent passion must lie for ever buried in his own bosom !

He must indeed correct its mad and wild intensity ! The habit of being in her society, would, he hoped, assist him to do so ! would moderate the extraordinary effect that society now had upon him ! would enable him to sober down his feelings into those of a truly affectionate brother, really solicitous for the welfare of a sister he sincerely loves.

CHAPTER II.

“Sudden was the trembling joy
Of my soul, when mine eyes, lifted to seek
The bounding deer, have met thy secret gaze,
Mighty king, fairest among thy thousands!”

THE interview described in the concluding pages of our last chapter, re-established, though certainly on very mistaken grounds, a kind of confidence between our hero and her who had ever been the darling of his childhood; banishing the momentary estrangement to which the first birth of a still fonder attachment had given rise.

It seemed to be now understood on both sides that they were to be quite brother and sister ; and, accordingly, under the pleasing illusion, Edmund henceforward paid and Julia received every devotion that a growing and blinding passion could suggest, except open declaration : yet did confessions pass from heart to heart every time their eyes met, while their understandings pretended to know nothing about the matter ; for each of them took care not to ask themselves any questions on the subject as long as they felt so perfectly happy as they now did in each other's society. Even the attentions of Lord Borrowdale soon almost ceased to pain Edmund : he could distinctly see that they were, at least, indifferent, if not annoying to Julia ; and, though he did not dare to ask himself why, the conviction was a source of infinite joy to him !

The gay mornings of the regatta, dinner company every day, and dancing every evening continued for some time, while the very public attentions of his said lordship towards our heroine ; and the jest, or, as it is technically phrased, the quiz about our hero and Lady Susan, tended to blind every one to the growth of the deep rooted attachment which was thus hourly possessing itself of every feeling and faculty of heart and of soul in Julia and in Edmund. Yet still were they brother and sister ; and, in their own opinion, behaving with the greatest prudence ; for love was not once mentioned by Edmund, and, as to Julia, she never even thought of it, she only felt it !

“ How good, how amiable it is of Julia,” thought Edmund, “ to be so kind to a friendless stranger !”

“ Who could be unkind to Edmund !”

thought Julia. "The gentleness of his manners win upon one so; the expression of his countenance is so interesting; his very smile is so nearly allied to melancholy that any one, with the least feeling, must dread the idea of causing him a moment's pain."

He, for his part, could not long deceive himself as to the nature of his own sentiments; but he thought there was no harm in cherishing them, while he could flatter himself that because he was not declaring he was concealing them. Or, had he thought otherwise, the temptation was, perhaps, too strong to be resisted.

He could not be blind to the pleasure with which Julia received every little mark of silent attention from him, and the blissful sensation which glowed within his breast at such moments was not to be foregone at the faint

instigations of a judgment bewildered by the influence of an absorbing passion. Yet he certainly fancied, that it was only his own futurity he was sacrificing for a dream of present felicity. Whatever he sometimes *felt* Julia's *feelings* to be, he undoubtedly always *thought* them the generous friendship she had promised him should ever be his ; and he thus reasoned with himself, that, as she had distinctly permitted him to feel and declare a brother's affection for her, it was to be expected, that she would receive with complacency those unpretending marks of regard which belong peculiarly to friendship. And, as Frances was often even more openly kind in her manner to him, all was, of course, as it should be. As to himself—it was no matter about himself ! he even felt a kind of satisfaction in thinking, that when he could no

longer enjoy the delirium of happiness under the dominion of which he now existed—when the hour of separation must come—why, then his misery should be as wild, as unlimited as his felicity was now! still would he watch for the dangerous smile, and when its light began to dawn on the features of Julia, he would have opened his heart to its intoxicating influence, had instantaneous death been the immediate and foreseen consequence. She often observed a shade of melancholy on the brow of Edmund, but she also observed that it gave way to sunny joy when a look, a word, or a smile of hers was directed towards him. To possess the power of giving happiness in a manner so easy and so innocent, to one for whom she did not deny that she had, all her life, had a very tender sisterly affection; to possess such a power and not to use it was

not in the affectionate nature of Julia. She did exert it every day, every hour, and when she saw Edmund's countenance light up with a beam caught from her smile, she felt a degree of pleasure that sometimes startled her; but she never ventured to ask herself whether or not all this was to lead to any ultimate results. Sometimes indeed, she recollected, with a sensation of panic, that Edmund must again leave Lodore House, must again return to the sea, to hardships, to dangers; and then she would strive to banish the scaring thoughts that crowded in upon her, but the next time she addressed Edmund, there would be a tenderness in the accents of her voice, a something indefinable in the expression of her eyes, that would shake his whole soul to its foundation, bewilder his every thought, undo his every resolve, and place him, passive as it

were, in the hands of a fate, at once too overwhelming and too delightful to be resisted.

Meanwhile, the whirl of gaiety, the noise of merriment, was still going on around them. Frances was the ringleader of the quizzers of Lady Susan, and her ladyship evidently liked being quizzed, so that Frances did not think mercy necessary. The subject did not amuse Julia near so much as it did her sister, but then, Julia was always of a graver cast. As for Edmund, he considered the whole business so complete a jest, that he took it very good humouredly, and received Lady Susan's attentions with great politeness. He even found it necessary, not unfrequently, to dance with her ladyship, or hand her in or out of a room, a carriage, or a boat, when he saw that she had actually been left for him. Sometimes too, he coloured and looked, involuntarily, to-

wards Julia, when pert young ladies told him, that they looked upon him as no better than a married man ! He coloured too, and more deeply, when men told him that, faith, he might make his fortune if he were not the most egregious blockhead in existence. That Lady Susan had fifty thousand pounds, was one of the best connexions in the kingdom, and a very pretty young woman beside, a thing scarcely to be looked for where so many other advantages were combined. Even Mrs. Montgomery and Mr. Jackson, agreed together, but privately, that Edmund was fortunate in the probability there was of his making so desirable a match.

They determined that it was best to let matters take their course, and not to say anything about it to Edmund. They also agreed that the subject was much too delicate to be mentioned to either Lord or Lady Arandale, who

must themselves see what was going on. Lord and Lady Arandale, however, saw only that their daughter flirted a little, (a thing they were very well accustomed to see,) for the quizzing, which was the chief part of the business, was, of course, kept within decorous bounds in their presence. Julia, when the subject was long dwelt upon by others, sometimes felt not quite comfortable, (without, however, asking herself why,) and this uneasiness, slight as it was, vanished the moment she met the eye of Edmund, or that he spoke to her, on the most indifferent topic.

But to return to Mrs. Montgomery and Mr. Jackson, they were so extravagantly partial to Edmund themselves, and had for so many years strengthened each other in the belief that there was no doubt of his being the son of a noble family; no doubt, in short, of the truth of the statements in the nurse's letter; that they did

not see the impropriety of a match between him and Lady Susan in the glaring light in which it would have been viewed by most others. They thought their inward conviction that his birth was equal to her ladyship's, when joined with his own great merit, his amiability in private, and high standing character in public life, quite sufficient to outweigh the trifling circumstances of their never having been able to discover, exactly, who he was ; and of his having no property but his captain's pay, and his fifteen thousand pounds prize-money. What Mrs. Montgomery might have thought of all this, had the subject been brought nearer home by the knowledge that it was to Julia Edmund was attached, it is hard to say ; for the best of us can seldom judge impartially when we ourselves, or those we love, are concerned. There are few mothers who do not expect their sons

to marry such women as, were they their daughters, they would not give to such men as their sons. But Mrs. Montgomery was spared all alarm respecting the intimacy between her grand-daughters and adopted son, by Edmund's supposed sudden admiration of Lady Susan, commencing on the very evening of his arrival; and the fuss, as we before observed, which every one had since made, about their mutual attachment.

There was also another blind to Mrs. Montgomery's penetration, in the marked and troublesome attentions of Henry to his cousin Julia, beside whom he was generally to be seen, while Edmund, by the contrivance of others, was dancing with or handing about Lady Susan. Mrs. Montgomery, in short, was very uneasy about it, and even lectured her nephew on the subject: for she knew how disagreeable

such a thing would be to Lord L——. Lord Borrowdale, too, who would have been a perfectly eligible match, was equally marked in his attentions; yet it was impossible to say, which Julia preferred: she generally smiled and looked happy, and this was all that could be ascertained. The lovers the while, strange to say, had taken no alarm, if we except Edmund's first day or two of endless fears; since which, a tacit, and, to themselves, unacknowledged conviction of each other's affection, had grown up in the heart of each, keeping peace within in spite of all outward occurrences. The miseries of doubt, the tortures of alternate hopes and fears, were, alas! reserved for a future stage of their attachment.

Edmund, indeed, was a little disturbed, one day, by Mrs. Montgomery's asking him, which he thought Julia received with most favour, the

attentions of Lord Borrowdale, or those of her cousin : adding, how much she disapproved of Henry's conduct in the business ; and requesting that Edmund, when they returned on board, would give him leave of absence as seldom as possible. " For," continued the old lady, " I have heard many sensible people say, that the sympathy which cousins naturally feel towards each other as relatives, is very apt to become love, (or, what is just as mischievous in its consequences, to be mistaken for it,) if young persons are allowed to be too much together. Now Lord Borrowdale, though a match of which her father would perfectly approve, is not, you know, near so handsome as Henry ; who certainly has," she added, with a sigh, " a great look of poor Maria." She next adverted, but slightly, (having determined not to discuss the point at

present,) to Edmund's own prospects with respect to Lady Susan. He had either fallen into a reverie, or he thought the subject too ridiculous to be treated seriously; for he merely said, with an air of great indifference, and in reply to more than one hitherto unanswered observation of Mrs. Montgomery's, "Oh, ma'am, that, you know, can never be any thing but a jest." Immediately after, however, changing his manner, he broke forth into an energetic, and almost passionate speech on the impossibility of one situated as he was, one who had no home, no country, no kindred; who knew not to what rank in society he belonged; who had not even a name, but by courtesy, and who, therefore, could not bestow one; ever thinking of marrying any being, however dearly, however fondly cherished their idea might be to the latest moment of existence!

All this was said with much feeling ; for Julia was in every thought ; while Mrs. Montgomery heard in it no denial of his attachment to Lady Susan ; but, on the contrary, an implied confession of how much he regretted the obstacles which stood in the way of their union. She was beginning to say something, intended to raise her desponding favourite a little, in his own opinion, when the conversation was interrupted by the entrance of Lord Borrowdale.

Edmund left the room half awakened from his dream of bliss ; and, therefore, far from happy. The uneasy feeling, however, lasted but till he had found Julia ; met her eye, and seen her smile ; and then vanished with a celerity, which none can understand but those who have felt the powerful, internal evidence, a look can convey.

CHAPTER III.

“What moves thy spirit thus?”

JULIA often happened to walk out before breakfast. Sometimes Frances was with her, and sometimes not; but Edmund always happened to join her.

One morning the three were walking together; the sisters, with their usual friendly familiarity, leaning each on an arm of our hero, whom they always treated as a brother; when Frances began, in a laughing manner, to ask him how soon his marriage with Lady

Susan was to take place. Edmund tried to smile, but sighed very heavily.

“No! so it is really serious!” cried Frances. Julia too, commenced a sort of sigh, but, as soon as she was aware that she had done so, she closed her lips, that the breath might descend without sound. Edmund, on whom, as we have just observed, she was leaning, felt the slight movement, and was strangely gratified; not that he presumed to assign any cause to the sigh.

“You know, Frances,” he said, in reply to the question about Lady Susan, “that business is completely a jest! I wonder, by the bye, her ladyship is not offended at being made the subject of a jest. But, were it otherwise,” he continued, with solemnity, “were she indeed the object of an overwhelming passion—were she indeed the being whose looks,

whose words, whose smile gave value to each moment of existence—were she in short the object of a *first love*, which you know they say cannot be torn up without carrying with it the very fibres of the heart itself, and leaving it incapable of future energy ; (I do not say that I should attempt to eradicate the sentiment, no, I should cherish its very miseries as preferable far to the barren waste, the joyless void of a heart weaned from love ;) but such feelings, whatever it might cost me to suppress them, should never be permitted to pass my lips, while mystery hung over my birth.”

“ But may you not be loved for your own sake, Edmund, whoever you are ? ” said Frances, “ and for the sake of the high character you have established for yourself, as Mr. Jackson says ? I am sure I could not love you better, nor grandmamma, nor Julia, nor Mr. Jack-

son, if you turned out to be the eldest son of his Majesty, and rightful heir to the throne of Great Britain !”

Edmund looked round involuntarily towards Julia, but her eyes were on the ground.

“I hope, Frances,” he said, in a mournful tone, “that I shall always possess the kind regard of the friends you have named. This hope, indeed, is and ever must be the only solace of my isolated, and, in all other respects, hopeless existence !”

“Don’t speak that way, Edmund, you make me quite melancholy !” said Frances, the tears starting into her eyes, as she held out her hand, which Edmund snatched and kissed.

“You *hope* !” said Julia, in a tremulous tone, in which was something of reproach. She looked up for a moment as she spoke, and Edmund saw the glistening of tears in her eyes also.

“I am sure,” he said, “of every thing that is noble, every thing that is generous, every think that is kind.”—“That last word, Edmund,” said Julia, interrupting him, “is more like the language of the friend you ought to feel yourself among us.”

“Besides,” said Frances, continuing the former part of the subject, “grandmamma and Mr. Jackson, you know, think it quite certain that you are the son of a noble family.”

“Still, all is mystery!” he replied, mournfully, as his thoughts reverted to the disgraceful possibility which had of late haunted his imagination, that of his being yet proved the child of criminal, though, perhaps of titled parents. “In short,” he continued, “a being, such as I am, must drag out existence, a solitary wanderer, unconnected with any,

but by the ties of charity, of compassion.”

After a pause, which neither of the sisters had voice to interrupt, he re-commenced—

“Duty, Frances, must soon again call me from the too happy dream I have lately enjoyed. Sometimes, indeed, in an hour of peace, I may, I shall, return to happy, happy Lodore, the dear paradise of my childhood ; and from the generous friendship there granted me, derive gleams of felicity ! snatches of a joy that will render the rest of life, perhaps, more dark.” He was silent a few seconds, then added, “ Yet so precious will such moments ever be to me, that I shall hold them cheaply purchased by the dreary wretchedness that must precede and follow them !” Julia’s tears flowed silently. Frances’s too, were again starting into her eyes. “ Nay, Edmund,” said the latter, “ there is something more than usual

in the matter ! this love, this First Love that you speak of so feelingly, I fear is a serious business after all ! for you never were in love before, I suppose. But, indeed, you need not grieve so much ; for I know—that is—at least—I have no right, perhaps, to betray such a trust—but still—I am perfectly certain that—that you will not be refused.”

“ For heaven’s sake what are you talking of, Frances ? ” exclaimed Edmund, colouring excessively, while Julia turned deadly pale.

“ I am saying,” replied Frances, “ that I am sure, Lady Susan will not refuse you : she thinks you—so——”

“ Lady Susan ! ” repeated Edmund, in a voice of disappointment. “ She certainly never will, Frances,” he added, “ for I shall never have the folly, or the presumption, to put it in her power to do so. You know I

have just explained to you that I can never marry—at least—But I may say never ; for it would indeed be wildly romantic to hope that I ever shall be enabled, even to seek to do so, consistently with honour, and my own—wishes ! the word is too inadequate. And were I, by the most unlooked-for circumstances, placed at liberty—am I to—to have—the vanity to—But you are leading me on to speak too much of myself, Frances ; which is always, you know, a dangerous, as well as an unbecoming topic.” He ceased, and all three walked on for a time in silence. At length Julia said, in a low tone—

“ Why should it grieve you so much, Edmund, not to—to marry ? I don’t think there is any occasion for every one to be married ! Now, I—for one—never intend to marry.” Edmund started, and looked round.

“ You, Julia !” he said. “ Yes,” she continued, dropping her eyelids, “ I am very happy,” and here a sigh contradicted her assertion, “ loving the friends I have loved all my life——” “ All your long, long life !” ejaculated Edmund, with a smile and a sigh. “ And I cannot imagine,” continued Julia, “ beginning now to love a stranger ; or suppose any thing so absurd as the possibility of setting up a new image in my heart, to be worshipped above all that have hitherto inhabited there ! Oh no ! that, indeed, can never be.”

“ So,” interrupted Frances, laughing, “ we are to understand that there is an old *image* set up there already ! (a first love, I suppose, as Edmund calls it.) Is it then his lordship ? or our amiable and interesting cousin ? It would indeed be a charity to love him, for I am sure no one else does.”

“ Oh ! you know Frances, I—don’t mean—I mean, one’s own friends,” said Julia. “ Now ask yourself : could you ever love a stranger, as you love those you have loved all your life ? As you love me for instance ? ”

“ A stranger,” said Frances, considering, “ no, certainly, not while the stranger continued to be a stranger.”

“ Well Henry, you know, is no stranger, so one of my guesses may be right, or perhaps you like Edmund better—I am sure I do.”

Edmund had remained perfectly silent ; for a few seconds, he had actually been stunned by the extacy of an irresistible conviction that Julia was saying, as plainly as words could express it, that she loved him, and that she never would or could love any one else ! But, on her appeal to Frances in reply to the interruption of the latter, his short lived transport

faded. "She alludes to the gentle ties of relationship," said he to himself, "and having known no feeling but that of calm and gradually formed affection, she cannot even imagine any other." A momentary pang indeed shot across his heart, as Frances alluded to Henry; for Julia might have loved him all her life, if she loved him at all; but he was not, as Frances observed, a character very likely to inspire love. Then her manner, the expression of her eyes, the tones of her voice; how different, when she addressed himself, from what they were when addressing her cousin! This was, however, a subject not to be too closely examined, though it served for the present to banish all painful thoughts respecting Henry.

"They talk, you know," said Frances, "of love at first sight!" "Oh!" replied Julia, "such people must either have no real friends,

and therefore no real affections, or be, themselves, incapable of feeling a real attachment !”

“ What do you call a real attachment ?” asked Frances. “ Why, one founded on—on—having all one’s life known, that the—friend—one loves unites every quality that is noble and estimable, not only in one’s own opinion,” replied Julia, blushing deeper and deeper at each word, “ but in that of those, whose judgment one respects, with all that is gentle, kind, and amiable towards oneself !” Edmund felt an almost irresistible desire to press her hand as she said this, nor could he be quite certain that he did not do so. “ It was Mr. Jackson,” she added, in a hurried manner, “ that was explaining the subject the other day. He said, you know, Frances, that it was because we are formed to find perfect happiness hereafter in loving absolute perfection, that we

experience so much delight in attaching ourselves, in this life, to what, on earth, comes nearest to perfection ! And what can we know of the perfections of a stranger ?”

“ Why, not till we discover them,” replied Frances, “ but then, should they prove greater than those of our older acquaintances, by your own argument of loving best what comes nearest to perfection, the stranger must deserve and obtain our preference.”

“ Oh ! impossible !” exclaimed Julia.

“ What is impossible ?” asked Frances. Julia made no answer, and Frances, after a moment or two of silence, enquired of Edmund, if the Lancer whom they had observed driving his curricule round the lake yesterday evening, were the same they had seen at the Regatta. Edmund looked in her face without

meaning or reply. His thoughts had been too differently employed to be so easily brought to bear on the identity of a Lancer. "You see," said Frances, "he is thinking of his First Love. We ought not to tease him with questions on less interesting subjects. I have been considering about it, Edmund," she continued, "and I cannot see what harm it would be for you to be married to Lady Susan, when it would make you both happy."

"Lady Susan!" repeated Edmund, "I am not thinking about Lady Susan, I assure you, Frances!"

"Indeed!" said a soft voice from behind, followed by immoderate laughter from several persons. Our trio looked round, and beheld Lady Susan herself, accompanied by Lord Borrowdale, Lord Morven, and Henry "We

have caught the gallant Captain speaking of your Ladyship at least," observed Lord Borowdale.

"Which, in my opinion, argues thinking," added Henry.

Edmund, not knowing well how to get out of the scrape, joined the laugh, and said, he believed he must plead guilty—of what, he left it to the imagination of his accusers to determine.

Lady Susan seemed to think it was of being in love, and that with herself; for she smiled, addressed our hero frequently, and was particularly obliging to him all the morning. Lord Morven, who did not seem much to relish the scene, asked, without addressing any one in particular, who that dashing fellow was who drove along the margin of the lake yesterday evening as they were boating. "The same,"

answered Lord Borrowdale, "who made himself so conspicuous during the regatta, splashing through the crowd in his curricule."

"I am aware of that," rejoined Lord Morven, "but I mean to enquire if any one knows who the young man is?"

"That no one I believe can make out. The name is Beaumont; but he has not brought any introductions, and has, I understand, declined the acquaintance of some persons who, taking it for granted that he was of the noble family of that name, wished to call on him."

"He is not then, it would seem, very consistent," said Henry, "for he literally scraped an acquaintance the other day with such a fellow as Lawson, (my aunt's man of business,) for the express purpose of asking to be introduced at Lodore House."

"He shows his good taste," said Lord Bor-

rowdale, with an appropriate glance towards the group of ladies.

“He appears,” observed Lord Morven, “to have a tolerable taste in most things: his horses are beautiful animals, and his dogs the finest I have seen!”

“Is he not rather pleasing-looking himself too?” asked Frances; “I thought so, as well as one could see passing. Did not you think so, Lady Susan?”

“Indeed I did not look at him,” replied her ladyship, glancing at Edmund. “So,” said Henry, with a sneer, “the fellow drives about to some purpose it would seem.” “To a most enviable one, certainly!” remarked the compliment-loving Lord of Borrowdale.

“Pray, can any one tell what brought him into this neighbourhood?” asked Lord Morven. “They were obliged,” answered Lord

Borrowdale, “to send from Whitehaven to Carlisle for military, to quell a very serious riot of colliers, headed too, it seems, by one of the fair sex, who, I understand, leads her party in fashion of an equestrian amazon, and who had, they say, proceeded in triumph through every street in Whitehaven, terrified the poor quiet magistrates, overturned the carts of potatoes going down to the shipping for exportation, and, in short, lorded it over the whole population till the arrival of the dragoons.”

“How very well he plays the flute!” said Frances.

“Yes,” said Henry, “and what good care he took to keep his boat within hearing of our party, these several evenings on the lake.”

“I dare say it was quite by accident,” rejoined Frances; “and how picturesque the

effect was," she continued, turning to Lady Susan, "of the little skiff with its one white sail, appearing and disappearing round points of rock; the one reclining figure playing on the flute, the two dogs seated, one on each side, listening with profound attention, till at some dying cadence, pointing their noses upward, they would utter a long and piteous wail! while the rapt musician himself seemed unconscious not only of their wild accompaniment, and that of all the echoes far and near, but even of his own performance."

"He thought himself a perfect hero of romance, I have no doubt," replied her ladyship.

"Well!" cried Frances, "I do not think there was any appearance of affectation about him."

"Whoever he is," rejoined Henry, "he had better not wander about these woods in his

long feathers, or I shall be apt to shoot him in mistake for a pheasant."

"Henry, you had better take care what you do!" said Frances. "You are much too fond, let me tell you, of killing of every kind."

"Talking of shooting, what have you done with that fine setter of yours, St. Aubin?" asked Lord Morven.

"Shot him!"—"Why, for heaven's sake?"

"The rascal leaped up on me with his dirty feet, after I was dressed for dinner, the other day." "Shame! shame! Henry!" exclaimed both the sisters, at the same moment. "Too bad, faith," cried the gentlemen.

Frances began to tell Henry that nobody would ever love him, he was so wicked. He affected to laugh, and whispered Julia as he passed, loud enough, however, for Edmund, who was on the other side, to hear. "What

do *you* say to that, Julia?" At the same time, accompanying his words with an insidious look of tender, confiding enquiry. She was astonished, but had not presence of mind to reply : and even Edmund, at the time, only thought Henry impertinent. The party had now arrived in front of the house.

CHAPTER IV.

“ Here the bright diamond and the ruby take
The rose’s form ; and the deep amethyst
The violet ; while the modest pearl blends
It’s moonlight lustre with the sunny gem.”

WHILE all were taking their places at the breakfast table, Lady Susan was so obliging in making room for every one, that at last she found herself seated next to our hero. But, alas ! Julia was on his other side. To do him justice, however, he helped her ladyship abundantly, too abundantly indeed to many things she did not want: he even had the unparalleled

generosity to offer her, and that with a sudden start of recollection, his cup of tea when she had one of her own ; he also turned and begged her pardon, more than once, when it was not to him she had addressed herself.

“ You see,” whispered Lord Borrowdale, who, for lack of room near Julia, had seated himself on the other side of Lady Susan, “ poor Montgomery is so bewildered by the radiance of your ladyship’s smiles, that he actually does not know what he is doing.”

Lady Susan sighed and smiled, and tried to be of his lordship’s opinion. The following plan, which had been in agitation ever since the arrival of the Arandales at Lodore House, was now finally arranged. In short, Mrs. Montgomery, after many objections, at length consented to her grand-daughters accompanying their uncle’s family, back to Ayrshire, for about

a month. Captain Montgomery, and Mr. St. Aubin were invited to join the party. The Euphrasia being still in dock, our hero quickly assented to a proposal, by which he was to enjoy a continuance of Julia's society.

"Gentlemen!" exclaimed Frances, on receiving a message from a servant, "our poor little friend, Gotterimo! Oh, may we have him in, grandmamma? It will be so amusing!" "And I dare say every body will buy something from him," added Julia.

"He is, I believe, a deserving poor creature," said Mrs. Montgomery. "Shall we gratify the girls, and admit him?" she added, turning to Lady Arandale.

Lady Arandale, of course, assented, and orders were given accordingly. A young man, of a neat diminutive figure, now entered. His eyes sparkled with hope at the sight of so large

a company ; while, at the same time, a kind of bashfulness flushed his cheek and flurried his manner. The girls saw this, and felt for him.

“ Here, will you open the boxes on this table, Mr. Gotterimo ?” said Julia ; and while he was doing so, she observed, that when the first flush, called up by his entrance, went down, the poor creature’s countenance assumed an anxious and saddened expression.

“ I hope,” she added, “ you had good success in Bath ?” “ Yes, madam,” he answered, with some hesitation ; then added, “ it was first year, madam—every thing must have begin, madam.” This led to further enquiries, and a dismal tale of having been robbed by his partner, of the savings of his whole life.

Our breakfast party felt much commiseration for poor Gotterimo ; and commenced making purchases as a means of affording, at

least, temporary assistance. The sale of his goods raised the spirits of our poor little friend, who soon became all activity in displaying, and eloquence in recommending each shining article in his sparkling collection. A chain was admired by Edmund for its resemblance to a cable, and was purchased by Julia. Lord Arandale's eye accidentally fell on a musical box. Gotterimo set the air playing immediately.

“Is it not rather slow in the time?” said the Earl.

“Oh, de slow time, it do make listen!”

“I should prefer something less dismal,” said his lordship.

“So 'tis, sir! De quick time, it do make dance!” and, while he spoke, with nimble fingers he was winding up a curious seal which now began to execute a more lively air.

“That is pretty!” said the Earl. Gotterimo proffered the seal to his lordship.

“The articulation of the box is superior,” observed Lady Susan.

“Dis be more superior,” cried Gotterimo, presenting the box to her ladyship. “The seal is the prettier thing,” persisted Lord Arandale. “If you vil please, sir, bote be de best,” pursued Gotterimo, offering both. Here every one laughed. The little man looked round him enquiringly, then, rallying, said—“So ’tis, sir, de seal be de best beautiful! de box be de best music!” and he added, smiling sheepishly, “every ting be de best fen it bring Gotterimo de money!” This was logic not to be resisted, and the Earl took both, together with watches, seals, and chains, for three or four absent nephews; while Lady Arandale selected handsome presents for as

many absent nieces. Thus went on a brisk sale of poor Gotterimo's goods, when Mrs. Montgomery, happening to cast her eye over the contents of one of the jewel boxes, which lay open, her attention was fixed by a curious mosaic ring : she caught it up and examined it with a much deeper interest than it seemed to merit. Gotterimo, believing she was admiring the workmanship of the article, silently undid the clasps of a small morocco case, and placed it open before her. It contained the set of mosaics to which the ring belonged : her countenance changed ; and Julia remarked that movement of her head which always indicated strong emotion. Mrs. Montgomery turned the centre medallion. On the back part of the gold rim was engraved Maria, her sister's name, and the mark by which they used to distinguish between their necklaces. She

turned deadly pale, and was only prevented sinking to the ground by the united support of Julia, Edmund, and Frances.

The moment Mrs. Montgomery recovered, she called for Gotterimo, and enquired, anxiously, where, when, and how those ornaments had come into his possession. "Dem be second hand, Madam," he replied; "I have buy dem of a gentleman in London." The name Gotterimo could not immediately call to mind. He had seen the person in question but once. In reply to the question of what sort of looking gentleman the person was, he said, "he vos tall and good look; look angry fen he no please, and have de loud voice." Our little jeweller, however, offered to make "enquiry" of a friend of his, to whom, he said, "de same gentleman have sell de grand old plate, and de great many

picture, and de big box of de old fassion moneys.” The purchase of the necklace had been lately made ; but all that Gotterimo knew further of the person who had sold it to him was, “ that he have rob and cheat so many tradge people ; and have hire de big house in — Place, in London, to make dem tink him grand gentleman ;” but that when he, Gotterimo, last left town, “ de house vas empty, vid de bill ‘ To Let, Furnish,’ on de vindow.” All now remembered to have read a recent account in the papers of the said swindler and his associates, with their assumed names.

The mosaics were purchased, and Gotterimo, after receiving considerable charitable donations, dismissed ; while Mrs. Montgomery’s agitation of spirits was, at length, in some degree composed, by Mr. Jackson’s reminding

her that the necklace must have been parted with many years ago, by those of whom she thought ; and that, its having since passed into the hands of a knot of swindlers, was by no means a remarkable circumstance.

CHAPTER V.

. "On the shadowy margin
Of the lake, in a spot sequester'd."

"CAN that noise be the bagpipes?" said Frances to Julia, trying to look from an upper window in one of the turrets of Arandale Castle. But no object immediately near the building could be discerned from windows situated as were those of this apartment. The more removed prospect, however, was rich and magnificent. Woods, which seemed interminable, every where met the eye; with, here and there, an opening among their ranges, displaying a

grassy avenue which ran along till lost again in the far perspective of grove meeting grove. In some of those avenues stood herds of deer, looking around them with an air of the most stately security ; in others, even hares and rabbits were sometimes seen to venture from under cover, cross a path, and disappear again, whilst innumerable cawing rooks, continually passing and repassing each other's heavy flight, hovered over all the summits of the trees ; and in their branches sat gay plumed peacocks, uttering, from time to time, their wild cry. To complete the picture, one of the grassy avenues already described, terminated in a smooth, still sheet of water, an arm of which was crossed, at a considerable height, by a light bridge of iron work ; while, on its glassy surface, sailed two snow white swans, the sole visible inhabitants of this their watery realm.

“It is the bagpipes, my Lady,” said Alice Smyth, “the housekeeper told me to tell your ladyships, that that was the way your ladyships would know when breakfast was ready. The old piper walks up and down under the windows, playing highland tunes all the time of breakfast, which my Lady Arandale makes herself every day at ten o’clock, and never waits for any body, but sends all away again at eleven, let who will or will not come down.”

“And does her ladyship make no allowance for the first morning after a long journey?” said Frances, (for they had all arrived at Arandale but the night before); “I declare my limbs are quite stiff. But we had better make haste, or, by Alice’s account, we shall have no breakfast,” she continued, taking her sister’s arm.

As they passed along the galleries above,

and across the halls below, numerous domestics pointed out, in silence, the way to the breakfast room. On their entrance, a general move took place among the gentlemen, though only the family party, each offered or pointed out a seat or seats. It so happened, that Julia took one offered by Edmund, who seated himself beside her, and began silently placing within her reach, every thing she could possibly want.

Lady Arandale sat at the head, Lady Susan at the foot of a long table; the one filled tea, the other coffee; and, in the intermediate space appeared the usual hot rolls, toast, eggs, &c. of an English breakfast, reinforced by the Scottish addition of crisp leaves of oaten cake, thin as writing paper, together with comfits, marmalade, and all sorts of

sweetmeats. Lord Morven presided at a side table, abundantly covered with savoury pies, cold meats, and dried fish; while Lord Arandale seemed to have the sole possession of a third and lesser one, where he alone was eating of a certain preparation of oatmeal, called in Scotland, porridge.

“You have quite forsaken your post, Captain Montgomery,” said Lady Susan. “I beg a thousand pardons,” exclaimed Edmund, starting up, “I thought I had filled all the cups.”

“Indeed!” replied her ladyship, in a tone of much pique, “Oh, pray be seated,” then, affecting a laugh, and closing her eyelids quickly once or twice to disperse a tear that might else have betrayed her mortification, she added, “you did not then, let me inform you, fill

even one. Nay, do pray sit down !” she continued, as Edmund made another attempt to rise, “I have completed my task with very little fatigue, I assure you, though you were so much shocked at the idea of my undertaking it.” Lord Morven, a wing of pigeon suspended on his fork, looked round at his sister with a broad and silent stare. She blushed, and addressed, successively, Henry, Frances, and Colonel Morven, without waiting for an answer from any of them. Edmund coloured, and Julia, who had neither been addressed nor accused, but by her own conscience, coloured also.

Lord Arandale, having dispatched his first course, joined the general table to finish his repast with some of the good things it afforded. Plans of amusement for the day now became the general topic ; Julia and Frances

begged that they might be permitted to explore some of the beauties of the grounds, which, from their windows, promised so much. Lady Susan proposed a visit to her cottage; it was one of those imitations of a real rustic habitation, which, situated in some delightful retirement in the midst of extensive pleasure grounds, were the fashionable playthings of the great young ladies of the day. A spinning wheel was always a part of the furniture, and a proficiency in its use a necessary accomplishment to ladies possessing these rural boudoirs. Her ladyship's proposition seemed agreeable to every one; particularly as the walk to the cottage led through much of what was most interesting in the grounds. Immediately after breakfast, therefore, the whole party assembled in front of the castle to commence their ramble.

Lord Arandale saying that he would show

Julia the way, drew her arm over his ; Lord Morven offered his to Frances ; Henry joined Colonel Morven ; Lady Susan walked alone ; and Edmund, who on first setting out had intended to walk at the other side of Julia, felt himself obliged, in common politeness, to step forward and join the lady who had no companion. He did not, however, intend to offer his arm, as he meant to avail himself of the first favourable opportunity for desertion. But her ladyship struck her foot against the stump of a flower root, then limped a step or two, and next came in contact with a loose stone : in short he found it impossible to evince a suitable concern for such accidents, without saying something about an arm. Lady Susan accordingly took his arm ; laughed at her own giddiness, confessed her want of a guide ; “ Though,” she added, “ here I ought rather

to be yours, instead of making myself so troublesome." Edmund said, very coolly, as he thought, that he was happy in being useful; reproached her ladyship in due form for misnaming the pleasure of being so, a trouble; and proceeded to hope that she had not suffered materially from his negligence, in the first instance. There was something so soothing, so persuasive in Edmund's manner and voice, at all times, that common politeness from him, possessed an almost dangerous charm; and her ladyship was willing to be deceived.

Such a manner must be the result of suppressed feeling, thought Lady Susan; but she remembered the coffee: yet, might not even that, she asked herself, be one of the strange inconsistencies of love. Her spirits began to rise; and her good humour, never long absent, returned. She introduced sentimental subjects, and fre-

quently spoke in so low a tone, that Edmund was obliged to stoop towards her to gather the meaning of what she said ; so that to those who walked behind them, they appeared to be engaged in very earnest, and very interesting conversation. They turned off into a narrower walk ; and the next time Edmund looked over his shoulder, which he did rather oftener than Lady Susan liked, not one of the rest of the party was any where to be seen.

“ Your ladyship should certainly know the way here,” said Edmund, hesitating, and slackening his pace ; “ but we have either left them all very far behind, or taken a wrong path.” “ This is the prettiest way to my cottage,” said her ladyship, “ to which they will all certainly bend their steps, by whatever walk they may have gone round.” Accordingly, our advance couple proceeded onward unin-

interrupted through delightful solitudes. Her ladyship grew more and more romantic ; many of her opinions, many of her very expressions were in perfect unison with the secret sentiments of Edmund ; though those sentiments had, it must be confessed another object ; Edmund's replies, therefore, were frequently bursts of feeling suddenly checked ; he was often silent, and sometimes sighed.

Lady Susan no longer doubted. There was a struggle in her bosom between natural modesty and a generous wish to reward the attachment of one, who was kept silent by honourable and manly motives.

By this time they reached the cottage. It was all that was rural ; thatched, of course, and overgrown with jessamine, honeysuckle, and ever blowing roses. Buried in the deep woods that surrounded the castle, it had a little

paled in garden and a small space of green, clear in its front ; and, at the foot of the green, ran a little rivulet with a plank thrown over it, to form a rustic bridge. Tamed pheasants strayed about instead of barn-door fowl, a kid was tied to the paling, and a sheep with two lambs fed on the little plot of grass before the door.

Her ladyship having, with Edmund's assistance, crossed the plank, caressed each of her favourites as she passed them, and, leading the way through the little garden, opened the latch of the cottage. All within was perfect rusticity : the furniture consisted of a small dresser with a few delf plates, a corner cupboard with some common looking cups and saucers, a deal table, a few wooden chairs, a low three legged stool, a spinning wheel, a kettle and some dried herbs suspended from the ceiling, some bright tin utensils arranged on nails against the wall

over the chimney-piece, and a small looking-glass hung at the side of the latticed window.

Lady Susan became silent and absent ; went to various repositories of grain and fed each of her pets ; Edmund, of course, assisting. When she had finished, she seated herself on the three-legged stool, and began to spin with great assiduity and quite a practised hand. Edmund, whom she had requested to take a chair beside her, sat for some time in silent admiration of her performance. Suddenly, she lifted the toe of the foot that had kept the wheel in motion, and suspended the little white hand over the fore finger, of which the thread had been passing. “ This spot, you see, Captain Montgomery,” she said, “ is my plaything ; yet, how happy might people be whose all it was ! ”

“ Certainly ! ” he replied with much energy,

instantly making Julia in imagination its mistress, and himself her partner for life : “ Here is all that unsophisticated nature calls for ; and, in the society of an object beloved, how seldom would the outer world be remembered !”

“ Her ladyship blushed and sighed ; but Edmund’s thoughts were full of another image, and the blush and the sigh, which else might have spoken volumes, were unnoticed by him. A considerable pause ensued. “ It certainly is madness,” said Lady Susan at length in a low voice, and with some hesitation, “ It certainly—is—madness, to sacrifice realities to opinions, and those opinions not our own !”

“ Oh, most assuredly !” replied Edmund, “ when such is the case ; but when our own opinions, our own sense of all that is honourable, just, grateful, are in direct opposition to our own feelings of all that :”—he recollected

himself, broke off suddenly, and coloured : not that he apprehended being misunderstood ; he rather dreaded that he was too well understood, and conscious that he thought of Julia while he spoke, feared he had inadvertently betrayed sentiments it was so incumbent upon him to conceal. “ Yet—yet—” said her ladyship, “ if—if the object—of an attachment so tender, yet governed so entirely by honourable principles, is willing to wave imaginary, in favour of real superiority ?”—and she held out her hand.

Edmund first stared at the hand ; then, scarcely conscious of the mechanical movement, took it in his. “ For heaven’s sake, what do you mean, Lady Susan ?” he exclaimed, changing colour twenty times in a minute ; for, still possessed with the one idea, and too little of a coxcomb to be ready to believe

her ladyship seriously attached to him because idle people had jested on the subject, the thought crossed his mind in the confusion of the moment, that Lady Susan must be in the confidence of her cousin, and must be expressing her belief that Julia returned his attachment.

Lady Susan spoke again,—“It would be mere affectation in me, Captain Montgomery,” she said, “to pretend blindness to the state of your feelings, and I respect the motives that have prevented their open declaration—” Her ladyship looked down, paused, and trembled excessively. Voices were heard without. The party passed the paling gate, and moved along the little walk of the garden. Lady Susan looked in alarm towards the door, coloured very deeply, and said, in a hurried tone, and with a kind of smile that struggled with a few tears of mingled pleasure and shame, “It is

rather hard, that I should have it to say, half unasked after all ; yet, in favour of your motives, which I honour, I will say it—I am yours !” At this moment, the whole party flocked in, and filled up the little cottage room. Lady Susan snatched away her hand, which Edmund had been too much puzzled to resign, and resumed her spinning in a state of overwhelming confusion. Edmund stood rooted to the spot, looking and feeling, if possible, still more confounded ; his colour mounting gradually as his perception of the truth cleared up, while his countenance became filled with expressions the most inexplicable !

Lord Arandale, fortunately for Lady Susan, was too busy speaking to Julia about some of the beauties of the grounds to observe his daughter. But he addressed an ear that heard little of what he said. Julia, during the walk, had

been wishing that Edmund would join them. She had observed him when going on before the rest of the party with Lady Susan, and, seemingly engaged in a conversation so earnest ; and she had, even then, felt a slight unacknowledged sensation of uneasiness.

On entering the cottage, the first object that met her eye was the eye of Edmund. For the first time its expression did not banish every shadow from her thoughts, did not bring sunshine to her heart. It had never before had a meaning that she had not felt, at least, (if not exactly understood,) and felt with a too dangerous consciousness of delight ; now his eye wandered from hers without an answering look. Lady Susan, too, how extraordinary was her expression ! Julia became in one moment, though she had no time to ask herself why, miserable ! entirely miserable ! It was a kind

of wretchedness, too, that she had never before even imagined. It puzzled—it alarmed her. A hopelessness came over her heart, that in all her grievings over the thoughts of Edmund's going away, she had never known. Though she had never formed any other plan but that Edmund was to be her friend, her brother, she his friend, his sister ; this had all been, while the bare idea of ever being other than the first in his affections, had not once presented itself to her imagination as even possible ; but now, unaccustomed as she was to analyze subjects of love and marriage, there was something in the circumstances of the two conscious beings before her, which seemed obviously to set up a living, breathing object between herself and Edmund. Why such should be any obstacle to brotherly and sisterly regard still subsisting between them, she did not particularly enquire ;

yet all the stores of love and happiness that she had been collecting from infancy, seemed now to have been swept away in one single moment. She continued, however, to hang on the arm of Lord Arandale, and to answer any direct questions put to her as well as she could. After examining and admiring the cottage and grounds, the party at length returned to the gravel-sweep before the castle.

A curricie, with a gentleman driving, and a lady seated beside him, was now seen approaching. "Here is Lady Morven at last," said Lord Arandale, letting go Julia's arm, and advancing towards the new arrival.

"Matilda, I declare!" cried Lady Susan, hastening forward with her brother, who, on their return from the cottage, had, in a very marked manner, insisted on her taking his second arm. Edmund, who had walked in silence

on the other side of Julia, pondering partly on her altered manner, and partly on his own late adventure; when Lord Arandale withdrew his support, took up her hand, softly, and drew it over his arm; bending forward, at the same time, as if anxious to catch a view of her countenance. She kept her head, however, carefully turned in a contrary direction, and the moment they reached the steps, without speaking or looking round, withdrew her arm, glided away, and hurried up to her own room. Yet, such is the weakness of the heart that loves, that she had felt less unhappy during the few seconds her arm had rested on that of Edmund.

Julia's conduct and feelings on this occasion, were certainly very foolish, but it must be remembered that she was scarcely eighteen; that she had been brought up in per-

fect seclusion, a seclusion too of sentiment, where, from five years old, she had never seen, or even heard any thing of life, but within the one domestic circle, in which all that was thought of, was tender mourning for the one that was lost, and tender cherishing of the few that were left. It is not then surprising that those few, and the first place in their hearts, should be romantically valued by one whose opening mind had thus, in every stage of its developement, been strongly impressed with the one idea, that all the rest of the world must be for ever strangers to her, in comparison of those who had, in this exclusive manner, possessed her earliest affections. And when, in addition to all this, the spell of a *first love* had fallen on a heart so prepared, could much philosophy be expected?

CHAPTER VI.

“ Is this a madness that is upon me ? ”

THE party we left at the door, reinforced by a number of newly arrived nephews and nieces of my lord's and my lady's, were by this time entering the great drawing-room, at the further end of which Lady Arandale was seated on a sofa, arranging, on a table before her, the presents she had brought for her nieces. From out of the entering group, one lady, whose precedence seemed to be undisputed, came forward towards Lady Arandale. It was Lady

Morven. She was very tall, and very slight with long thin limbs, a small head, a little round face, deeply pockmarked, small grey eyes, scarcely any nose, and a small mouth without any lips. She was highly rouged, and dressed both fashionably and extravagantly; and her figure, though totally without form, had an air of grace as well as of elegance. The first salutation over, she flung herself on a sofa opposite to that occupied by Lady Arandale.

“And pray, Matilda, my dear,” said the last named lady, “why did you not come to Lodore after all?”

“La! ma’am, I had nobody to drive me.”

“Had na’ ye, yier coachman, my dear?”

“You know, I can’t bear any body’s driving but Graham’s; and the wretch thought fit to fall out of his curricule the very day he was coming over to take me: so there I have had

him, with his arm in a sling, lounging about at Morven Hall, ever since : quite a bore, I assure you !”

“ Your ladyship does me in-fi-nite honour !” faintly drawled out Mr. Graham, from the depths of a repose-chair, well furnished with down pillows, in which he had established himself. “ Cruel—the distance,” he continued, letting fall word after word, “ which divides me—from—so much goodness—Pray—Lady Morven—are the cushions—on that—sofa—mul-ti-tudinous ?”

“ Yes, there are a good many,” replied her ladyship, and as she spoke she made room for him, adding, “ had you not better come over ?”

“ I am meditating the exertion of a removal shortly,” he rejoined, “ but just—at present—it is quite—impossible : I am—absolutely in—elysium—enjoying—the very first sweets of an

attitude—the most deliciously easy, in which—I had ever—the good fortune—to place myself.”

“And pray,” asked Lady Arandale, “was this nursing of Mr. Graham’s wounds, a *tête-à-tête* business?”

“Yes,” replied Lady Morven, “except a parcel of the girls, you know,” (the girls were all above twenty) “and that creature, Sir Archibald Oswald, harmless as usual, though more mad, I think, than ever!”

“Which is that, Graham or Lady Morven, who does Sir Archibald Oswald the honour of naming him?” demanded a voice, in the tones of which a slight tincture of affectation was blended with melancholy and melody. It arose from a yet unseen personage, of whose arrival no one seemed to be aware, and who, reclining on a chaise-longue in the recess of a

distant window, was sheltered from observation by a large circular stand of exotics. Lady Morven started on her seat with a sort of rebound. The young people smiled, and tittered a little. Lord Arandale looked at them and frowned.

“Are you there, my good friend?” he said, going towards the reclining gentleman, who, at his approach, slowly and reluctantly arose.

“Ye may weel ask whilk it was that spack, Sir Archy,” observed Lady Arandale, who prided herself on speaking broad Scotch. “It is vara true, there is nae telling the voice o’ the one, fra that o’ the other.”

“Why,” drawled Lady Morven, “I quite admire Mr. Graham’s accent, and therefore I make it a point to speak like him.”

“Your ladyship is too good!” articulated the drowsy subject of this compliment. Sir

Archibald by this time stood quite erect, answering some polite enquiries of Lord Arandale and Lord Morven, who seemed desirous to unite in shewing a peculiar degree of courtesy to this guest. Edmund stood alone, observing with much interest the appearance of Sir Archibald, the peculiar and melancholy melody of whose voice had first drawn his attention. His figure was tall, well proportioned, and had an air of dignity. He seemed little more than fifty; but very grey for that age. His hair was parted on the forehead, and fell on either side of the face so long, and with so little regard to present modes, as to resemble that of one of the ancient bards. His countenance, though its beauty was almost defaced by the deepest furrows of affliction and premature old age, still retained the outlines of fine features,

to which the melancholy that predominated in its expression, gave much interest.

Lord Arandale summoned Edmund by a look, and presented him to Sir Archibald, saying, " This gentleman, Sir Archibald, can talk to you on your favourite subject, of naval affairs, better than most people." Edmund now joined the group, and while taking a part in the very incoherent conversation that was going on, observed, with much compassion, that the fire which awakened animation from time to time, called into the eye of the evidently unfortunate being before him, varied from wild to gloomy, and from gloomy to wild, but never once expressed pleasure ; indeed it was when he attempted to smile that the light was wildest : and how instantaneously, how darkly did the cloud that thus had opened but for a moment, close again !

“What a wreck is there !” said Lord Arandale to our hero, as Sir Archibald and Lord Morven left the room together. Edmund looked a sort of enquiry, which the Earl answered thus : “Gambling, gambling it was which ruined him, as it has done many others.—There is a man who, twenty-five years since, possessed a property of twelve thousand per annum, in this county, where he was well known and much respected by us all ;—now he has not sixpence in the world. He lives in the Isle of Man ; his poor wife is broken-hearted, they say ; and his boy is bringing up without education or prospects. It was the birth of that child to an inheritance of ruin, which, I believe, unsettled poor Oswald’s mind. When he is sane he remains on the island in the strictest retirement ; but, when he wanders in mind, he wanders in body also, and throwing himself

into any fishing smack or boat that happens to be on the coast, wherever he may chance to be landed on the main land he makes his way to this neighbourhood, visits the houses of those with whom he used to associate in his days of prosperity, seems unconscious that any change has taken place, and wears, wherever he goes, such clothes as are left for him in his room. Sometimes he enters the house where he once was master, fancies it still his home, and acts the host with all the graceful politeness for which he was once remarkable, treating the family now residing there, and any company they happen to have with them, as his guests."

"He looks to great advantage when he is here," said Lady Morven, "Alfred's clothes fit him so well."

"Did your ladyship ever happen to see him at the Laird of Moorland's?" enquired

Mr. Graham, who had now got to the sofa on which Lady Morven lolled ; “ the laird, you know, is very short, and very fat, and you never saw such a figure as Sir Archibald makes in his clothes ! ”

“ Misfortunes, even when they are, as in this instance, the results of the sufferer’s own imprudence, still are bad subjects for merriment,” mournfully observed Lord Arandale, to whom the attempt to cast ridicule on his unhappy friend seemed very unwelcome. “ You see, Montgomery,” he continued, turning to Edmund and leading him apart, “ what gambling will bring a man to ! It was,” and he lowered his voice and looked towards Henry to see that he was not within hearing, “ it was that horrible St. Aubin, (that young fellow’s father,) who ruined poor Oswald. I believe too,” he added, “ that Oswald was very sin-

cerely attached to poor Maria before she made the unfortunate choice she did ; and that disappointment had its share in throwing him into bad habits."

"What is the cause," asked Edmund, "of the interest Sir Archibald seems to take in the Navy?"

"He did belong to the profession in very early life," replied his lordship, "and was fond of it, I believe ; but left it when his father and elder brother died. In his lucid intervals, I understand, he wishes very ardently to get his boy afloat ; but no one, you see, likes to take charge of a lad so unfortunately situated. It would be attended, too, with some share of expense ; for poor Oswald has not even the means of fitting him out ; and Lady Oswald's relatives, who are very powerful, have never pardoned her the misfortunes she has brought

on herself; for Oswald was nearly a ruined man when the marriage took place; she, however, had been previously engaged and attached, and would not break it off."

Edmund was so forcibly struck by this melancholy relation, that he made no immediate reply. He thought of what he himself had been when a boy; of what he might have been at this day had no benevolent hand been stretched forth in his behalf. His resolution was taken, but he made no allusion to it at the time, and retired to dress pondering the subject: for the half hour bell was ringing, and all the party dispersing on the same important errand. Frances and Lady Susan, who had all this time been busily engaged in a distant window in seemingly very confidential conversation, were the last to part.

CHAPTER VII.

. . . . "The lovely light of Innisfail,
Hides within her shadiest bow'r and weeps."

WHEN Julia heard Frances approaching, she was, for the first time in her life, guilty of artifice; she snatched up a book, and appeared to be busily engaged reading. Frances rang the bell, then went towards a looking glass, and began to take pins out of her dress.

"Do you know, Julia," she said, "I think that Edmund and Lady Susan will be married after all!" Julia pretended not to hear, and in

reality did not see, (correctly at least) for the words on the open page before her seemed quitting their ranks, and mingling in one disorderly maze. This however was of little importance, as she had held the book upside down from the first.

“I can’t but think of all Edmund’s resolutions,” pursued Frances, laughing, and continuing the preparations for her toilet, without noticing the effect of her information upon Julia. The entrance of Alice here put an end to the subject.

“What shall we wear to day, love?” asked Frances.

“Wear——?” repeated her sister.

“Yes, what dress shall we wear?”

“Oh—whatever you like, love.”

“Bless me, my Lady!” cried Alice, “what do you want of your nightcap?” Julia snatched

off the half-arranged cap, and flung it on a chair, colouring, and replying in evident confusion, "I declare I forgot, I thought we were going to bed." Frances laughed so immoderately, that it gave Julia time to recover. She made a strong effort, aroused her faculties, and, to a certain degree, composed herself. The labours of the toilet completed, the sisters descended; Lady Arandale was seated on a sofa with Mrs. Morven, an elderly lady, the wife of a brother of my Lord. Lady Morven and Mr. Graham were lounging on an ottoman, talking about nothing, and apparently fearful of exhausting their slender stock of ideas by any extravagant expenditure, seemed trying which of them could articulate the slowest. Henry was standing in a window, flirting with no less than three of the Misses Morven. The fourth Miss Morven was seated on a sofa with

a Mr. Gordon ; Edmund and Lady Susan stood in a very distant window, in deep conversation ; and, in another and nearer window, stood Lord Arandale, General Morven, a brother of his lordship, Lord Morven, Colonel Morven, and two Messrs. Morven, in conversation with Sir Archibald Oswald. Julia and Frances entered, and some family introductions were made, during which, Sir Archibald left the circle of gentlemen which had surrounded him, approached the sisters, and stood gazing at them.

“Poor Sir Archibald was always a great admirer of beauty,” observed Lord Arandale, aside to the General, “and still, I think, it seems to possess a sort of soothing power over his exasperated feelings.”

“Perhaps,” said the General, “(though I don’t think either of the girls like their aunt,)

he may perceive that degree of family resemblance in Julia, which has, sometimes, so powerful an effect on the disordered imagination."

"He was so young," replied his lordship, "that I should think he could scarcely remember her." "It was a boy's love, certainly," said the General, "but it was, I believe, a *first love*, which, they say, leaves an indelible impression." "It is fortunate that he does not seem to perceive Henry's terrific likeness to his father," observed the Earl. By this time, Julia was seated, and Sir Archibald had taken a footstool, placed it at her feet, and seated himself upon it. He looked up mournfully in her face for a few seconds; and then, to the surprise of every one, commenced giving utterance to a low murmuring sound, which gradually swelled into the rich harmonies of a very old song,

all the changes of which were performed with the most perfect melody of voice, and to which a pervading melancholy, diversified by occasional starts of wildness, gave indescribable interest. All became silent listeners: not a whisper broke the spell; till the growl of the gong was heard, then its roar, like that of beasts of prey.

Sir Archibald ceased, listened, arose; and without appearing aware of his own late performance, offered his arm to Julia: and all this with quite the air of a man of the world; his manners, at the moment, were even tinged with that slight degree of affectation, which, once was one of his youthful foibles; while they bore no mark whatever of the deranged state of his mind.

Lord Arandale handed down Mrs. Morven; the General, Lady Arandale; Mr. Graham,

Lady Morven ; the Colonel, Frances ; Henry took two Misses Morven ; Mr. Gordon, the other two Misses Morven. Edmund next, led Lady Susan from the recess of the window. This last couple were first waited for at the drawing-room door, and then followed to the dining-room by Lord Morven, who seemed to view his sisters' flirtation with much more severity of aspect, than he manifested towards his wife's.

Lady Susan did not smile once, in the whole course of dinner ; a thing never known before.

Edmund was silently and respectfully attentive to her ladyship, but also grave. Julia received, with absent passiveness, the politeness of Sir Archibald, wondering the while, why Lady Susan did not look happy ! The rest of the party were very gay.

During the dessert, Sir Archibald asked Lord

Arandale, in a careless manner, how the pretty Mrs. Miller did. The Earl was at a stand for a few moments; but, throwing his recollections back some five and twenty years, he answered: "well, I believe—a beautiful creature she was," he added.—"Was!" repeated Sir Archibald; no accident, I hope has befallen the lady?" "Not any, to my knowledge," replied the Earl. Then addressing Mrs. Morven aside, he added, "only, that the suns of twenty or thirty summers have withered the fresh bloom, and the snows of as many winters, whitened the bright locks of pretty Mrs. Miller; but poor Oswald, I see, is thinking of our adventure with that fair dame, as of a business of yesterday. How mysterious is the power of association!" And the Earl smiled, though with a mixture of melancholy, at his own recollections. Mrs. Morven requested a

translation of the smile. "Shall I tell that good story, Oswald?" said Lord Arandale. Sir Archibald had become absent again, and replied only by a bow. Much curiosity, however, being expressed by the ladies, to hear what had been announced as a good story, the Earl was prevailed on to commence the following relation.

"Oswald and myself were a pair of wild fellows, in those days," he proceeded; "we happened to be riding together one fine morning, how long since I shall not say; when, passing through the village of Irvine, we saw seated in a window at work, but dressed gayly enough, a very beautiful young woman, no other than this said Mrs. Miller. We knew not, of course, who the lady might be, so went to a shop nearly opposite, to ask the question. Here we learned that the fair object of our en-

quiries, was the young wife of the old minister. We drew off, and put our horses' heads together, to consult on the measures to be adopted next.

“Old Miller, said I, will esteem it not only a compliment, but an eternal obligation, if I call on him ; and I can take any friend with me, you know, that I please. We rode to the door, sent in our names, and were admitted into a small, smoky, dirty parlour ; the inside of which I shall never forget. The perfumes of a lately removed dinner, of which a certain fragrant vegetable, and a no less odoriferous liquid, had evidently formed component parts, were overpowering ; especially to people who had been just galloping their horses over the fresh heath of the open moorlands. The old minister, in his worsted hose and red night-cap, (but I shall not attempt to paint him,)

met us, boo, booing, and returning thanks to my lordship for the honour conferred on him and his peur hoose, by my lordship's visit; and declaring, with another boo to Oswald, that ony friend o' my lordship mon be welcome."

Lord Arandale could imitate the Scotch accent very well, when giving humour to a droll story. " 'Your daughter, I suppose, Mr. Miller,' I said, bowing to the lady. 'My wife—Maistriss Miller—gin yier lordship has nay objection.' 'You are a fortunate man, Mr. Miller,' I said; 'such wives are not to be had every day,' and I bowed again to the lady, who smiled. 'Ye mauna pit nay sic notions intil woman's heade, my Lord,' said Miller; 'Meg kens vara weel hersel, that she could niver heve evened hersel tle a Minister, gin he hed been a young calant, at hed time tle

look about him for a mair befitting spouse.— Bit as a christian man, I ken 'at we awe come o' Adam and Eve ; and se, Meg, if she behave hersel, will di vara weel for me.' Oswald, mean while, was making some pretty side speeches to Mrs. Miller ; so that the old fellow, beginning to perceive that our visit was to his wife, not to himself, after fidgeting and looking foolish for a few minutes, seemed struck with a sudden thought, in pursuance of which he played us such a trick, as never was, I believe, practised before on two gay fellows like ourselves.

“ ‘My Lord,’ he said, with mock solemnity, ‘ this is just oor hoor for family preyer, whilk I niver defer for ony carnal interruption.—Yier lordship, hooiver, will heve nay objection, tle join yier voice tle oor devotions ; as, truly, this visit, marking yier personal respeck for yier

minister, hath proven.' So saying, and without giving us time to take any measures of self-defence, he fell on his knees and began to pray aloud. The lady knelt down also, and, faith, we were taken so by surprise, that if we did not absolutely kneel, we stood with our faces in our hats, resolving not to call again at that hour. The prayer was unmercifully long; extemporary, of course, and consisting chiefly of earnest supplication for grace to withstand all temptation to such errors as he thought fit, in his christian charity, to suspect were, just then, the besetting sins of his congregation. What a cordial we found the air, even of the street, when at last we got into it; which we did the moment the amen had been pronounced. In a day or two, however, we called at quite a different hour; but had not been seated many seconds, when the old fellow told us,

with a sly ironical smile, that we surely had the gift o' prophecy, for that we were just in time again for his family prayer. Accordingly he was about to kneel as before, but this being rather too much of a good thing, we made our escape, and gave up the acquaintance both of Maistriss and Maister Miller. Take notice, however, young men," continued the Earl, addressing himself particularly to his family circle, "I do not mean to offer this conduct of my own and my friends as an example for your imitation; it was highly improper, though in our own justification, I must add, that we had no worse intention than to frighten the old fellow a little, and excite the vanity of his wife; as, what we, in our wisdoms, considered a just penance for his having helped himself to one so much too young and too pretty for him."

During the comments which followed, Sir Archibald caught the sound of Henry's voice, which had the exact tone of his father's, particularly in a laugh. He glanced his eye in that direction, and now seemed to see young St. Aubin for the first time, though he was seated exactly opposite to him. Clouds gathered on Oswald's brow, and he directed across the table looks so fierce and so portentous, that the whole company became alarmed. The ladies rose to retire, and Lord Arandale, during the move which their exit occasioned, gave Henry a hint to keep as much as possible out of Sir Archibald's view.

CHAPTER VIII.

“ Yes, once did resolution fail.”

As it was still day-light some of the ladies walked to the gardens, others strolled about near the doors ; Lady Susan disappeared without speaking to any one ; Frances went to seek her ; Julia flung herself on a sofa in the great drawing-room, which she found quite deserted. She lay so much absorbed by her own meditations, as to be unconscious of the lapse of time. It became quite dark. Every thing was still about her. At length she heard a

very soft step approaching through the ante-room, and a figure in black appeared within the door, which was half open. It held in its hand a long white wand tipped with flame : it glided on with a step, now that it was on the deep Turkey carpet of the drawing-room, quite noiseless : it touched branches and candelabras with its magic wand, and left floods of light behind it : it proceeded through the glass doors of a green-house, at the further end of this spacious apartment, and continued crowning with radiance lustres that hung, at certain intervals, over the centre walk, till the whole long perspective became a dazzling maze of real and reflected illumination. Julia's eyes admired and, mechanically, followed what they beheld long before her comprehension was aroused to any understanding of what was going forward : at length she smiled as she

recollected that such had been her abstraction, that, for the first few moments after the entrance of the figure, she had viewed it and its operations with as much of almost superstitious astonishment as if she had never before seen a decent old butler, who was too well-bred to wear creaking shoes, light up a drawing-room.

She arose from the sofa, passed the man on his return through the great room, entered the greenhouse, proceeded along the centre walk between rows of orange trees, and in a blaze of light, till the white marble footway, branching off in two directions, led round on both sides towards a kind of arbour of sweets, which was screened from the entrance and principal walk by the intervention of an immense circular stand, crowded from the marble

floor to the glazed roof with numberless exotics. Here she seated herself.

The artificial day that reigned around, the excess of brilliancy resembling enchantment, the very intensity of light, seemed, if not literally shelter, at least security from sudden intrusion, by giving proof at once that none were near, and certainty that none could approach unseen.

“I wonder,” mentally ejaculated Julia, who by this time had renewed her meditations, “why she did not look happy!” She paused, and a tear or two fell. “Is it possible that he can love a stranger better than those he has loved all his life?” she thought, and a feeling of something like reproach passed through her mind. Then came a series of kindly recollections, making it very difficult to believe that this could be the case. Then she called to

mind, how Edmund always used to say, he never would marry; and how she, too, had determined never to marry. She reflected on this subject for some time; then asked herself a question, but very vaguely indeed; for she did not venture to give it the form of words, even in thought: the purport, however, was as follows:—if Edmund had ever said, that to be married to her was absolutely necessary to his happiness—what would have been her reply? A deep blush was all the answer she gave herself. She sat, unconscious of outward objects, till she felt her hand softly taken. She started, and looked up: Edmund stood before her. “Dearest Julia!” he said, “there has so evidently been some anxiety on your mind, some depression on your spirits, all this day, that I cannot resist taking, perhaps, an unwarrantable liberty, and entreating you to tell me what

it is that thus distresses you?" She kept her eyes fixed on the ground, and made no reply. "Did you not promise," he continued, "to permit me to call myself your friend, your brother? and is not confidence the privilege of friendship?" And he seated himself beside her, still retaining the hand he had taken.

"I don't wish, Edmund," she said, her face averted, "to hear you talk like a stranger about taking the liberty, and all that kind of thing: it only makes me more unhappy."

"More unhappy!" he repeated.

"But, you know," she continued, "when you wished so very much for my friendship, Edmund, it was when you first came home; now—you will probably—be—everyday—making so many new friends—that—perhaps—" "New friends!" cried Edmund.—Then, quite thrown off his guard, he added passionately;

“ what are all the new friends—nay, all the friends the world contains—what the whole world itself to me, in comparison of you, Julia! My earliest, my kindest friend?” he added hastily, fearful he had gone too far.

The assurance of a *friendship* so exclusive, so much in unison with her own ideas on the subject, and still more the tender and agitated tone in which words so kind were uttered, banished every thought of Lady Susan, and in one moment restored Julia to perfect happiness. For reply, she only lifted her eyes to his. Their expression seemed to him, at the moment, to justify him in pressing her hand to his lips, though afterwards he thought he had done very wrong. So much accustomed was Julia, however, to consider the establishment of perfect confidence between herself and Edmund, as quite necessary and right, that in all this

she saw but the kind reconciliation of *friends*, and never dreamed of being surprised, as some more experienced ladies might have been, that no fuller or tenderer declaration followed, neither apology, for having approached so near to such.

She now felt quite certain that Edmund still loved her better than any one else in the world ; and, therefore, she was happy. He thought his secret still safe, because he saw he had not given offence : indeed he saw more ! Suspicions, delightful suspicions fluttered at his heart. He watched the brightening of her features : yes, he could not refuse to admit the flattering, the intoxicating conviction, that the more his love betrayed itself, the happier Julia evidently was ! Thoughts like these ought to have filled him with sorrow and repentance ; but they did not—they caused a joy that no

words can paint ! and this was not a moment to resist its influence. He was gazing upon the countenance of Julia, she had just looked up to express kindness and confidence, tears of pleasure had started into her eyes, and now she was looking down again perhaps to hide them ; but they were stealing into view over cheeks that glowed with an animating, a beautifying confusion, which could not be termed a mere blush, for it visibly betrayed conscious happiness as well as bashfulness.

Words that, while possessed of reason, he had determined never to utter, literally trembled on his lips. But honour, gratitude, principle, flew to his aid, and rescued him from the eternal remorse, which, in a mind like his, must have followed an avowal of sentiments, it was so much his duty to conceal. He was enabled to be silent—but to withdraw his eyes from the

contemplation of the lovely being before him, to close his heart against the dangerous bliss that contemplation afforded, was impossible !

Music now struck up in the great room ; and at the same instant several persons entered the greenhouse. The next moment they were approaching along the centre walk, and calling Julia. Our heroine answered and made her appearance. Edmund, still trembling from the late agitation of his feelings, followed in silence. But when he saw the gay group gathering round Julia, he was struck with the sudden apprehension of her dancing with some one of them ; and, at this time, he could not view such an event, without a degree of horror, very disproportionate to the importance of the subject. He hastened therefore to her side, offered her his arm, and whispered something, probably a request to dance with him, as they immediately

accompanied those who had come in search of them, into the drawing-room, where quadrilles were forming.

Thus was Edmund preserved from further risk of an imprudence, which, in addition to the endless repentance it would have cost him, might have taught even the inexperienced Julia the necessity of treating him with more reserve. Hitherto, her affectionate heart, in its enthusiasm, had ever been ready to reproach her with estrangement and unkindness, when she experienced but the natural timidity inseparable from the feelings which were hourly growing upon her; so that the very parts of her conduct, which most strongly proved those feelings to be more than friendship, were by her, not unfrequently, considered as deficiencies in the frankness and confidence due to a friend, the companion of childhood; one, too, so deli-

cately situated, who thought himself so much obliged ; who might mistake a reserve, very proper towards strangers, (by whom Julia meant, all the world, except her grandmamma, Frances, Edmund, and Mr. Jackson,) for pride, for haughtiness, for a reminding him of his situation—No ! that thought was not to be endured ! At the present moment, however, her heart having been just lightened of an inexpressible load of sorrow ; of the first doubt it had ever known of Edmund's affection, she waited not to define its movements, but joined the dance, feeling as if she moved on air, though in an unusual flutter of spirits. Whilst he, as he led her to her place among those who stood in all the pride of rank and title, birth and fortune, felt his heart sink within him ; and, as he gazed upon her thus removed, as it were, to an incalculable distance, from the nameless

dependant on the bounty of her own very family, he wondered at the mad presumption that, but the moment before, had possessed him!

. Yet as from time to time she smiled and spoke to him, joy stole again into his bosom, and he experienced an undefined species of happiness during the remainder of the quadrille. As soon as it was over, however, and before Julia had taken her partner's arm to leave the set, Henry came up to her, and asked her to dance the next with him. She could not well refuse, and the moment she consented he drew her arm over his, and led her away to a vacant end of the room, where, as they walked up and down, he suddenly broke silence, saying, in a rude sort of half whisper, "You don't suppose, Julia, that Lord L. will consent to your marrying this picked up fellow! this Edmund! and I can tell you, the

manner in which you are behaving, will end in his being forbid my aunt's house, and indeed the houses of all your friends and relatives." If ever Julia's colour mounted, now it flew to cheek and brow; yet, indignant as she felt, such was her terror lest Edmund should chance to hear one of those shocking words, that she caught Henry's hand, and entreated him to lower his voice. At the same moment she looked involuntarily towards Edmund, and saw that he observed her; while Henry, grasping the hand that she herself had laid on his, carried it to his lips. She dreaded to provoke him by withdrawing it either as quickly or as angrily as she felt inclined to do; and he held it fast, with the most malicious satisfaction in her dilemma, which he perfectly understood; while, as if to mortify her the more, he kept up, by countenance and manner,

a sort of dumb show of tender solicitude. She, however, forced back her presence of mind, and, in an under tone of suppressed vexation, trying at the same time to look dignified and as angry as her youth and natural gentleness would permit, said, “do not for a moment imagine, Henry, that I dread your rude, impertinent remarks on my own account, but take care you do not let one word be heard, which can wound the feelings of Edmund. As for the motive of my anxiety on this point, if you are not capable of understanding it, remain in ignorance of it, or judge it what you please! It is to my father, not to you, sir, that I shall give an account of my actions.”

“Mighty fine!” he replied; “but, Julia, if my anxiety for you proceeds from my own attachment, and, I suppose I may presume

where Edmund does, you cannot be surprised that I should not wish to see you throw yourself away ; but I believe," he added, with a sneer, provoked at the evident scorn depicted on Julia's countenance at the mention of his own attachment, "you are tolerably safe, as the gallant Captain Montgomery happens not to be at leisure to accept your ladyship's proffered affections, being otherwise engaged."

It is wonderful how many times in the course of the evening Julia repeated over to herself the two words, "otherwise engaged."

"The world is come to a pretty pass," continued Henry, "when two titled ladies are pulling caps for a fellow without a name !" Julia's bosom was swelling with indignation, pride, and anger ; she was dying to give them utterance, but she felt that, now, she dare not trust herself to speak, while her fingers, in

despite of her utmost efforts, being still held, as in a vice, she could not disengage herself without a publicity she wished to avoid. Indeed, Henry seemed careless how roughly he treated the delicate little hand thus imprisoned in his ; for now, as at all times, for reasons best known to himself, he was more intent on persuading others that he was well with his cousin, than on really making her believe that he loved her.

At this moment Sir Archibald, who had been standing with his arms folded at a little distance, came hastily forward, and seized Henry by the collar, crying out—"Villain ! villain ! villain ! have I found you at last ?" Henry disengaged himself, and turned on his assailant, with a look of pale rage so horrible that, had time and place agreed, no less than a mortal struggle seemed likely to ensue.

Julia uttered a scream of terror : all was in a moment confusion and consternation. Lord Arandale, however, interfered, and finally prevailed on his nephew to leave the room for the evening ; explaining to him in hasty whispers, as he almost forcibly led him aside, that Sir Archibald, from the bewildered state of his mind, was evidently unconscious of the lapse of time, and must in consequence have mistaken him for his unfortunate father, against whom he had but too just cause of complaint, and to whose memory a discussion of the subject would be by no means creditable.

Julia stood trembling, and, for a moment, alone ; the next, Edmund was at her side. He saw that there were tears in her eyes. He offered his arm to lead her to a seat. She took it with a heavy sigh, but avoided his look of enquiry. He felt much less happy than he had

been. Why had she caught Henry's hand? Why had she suffered him to press hers to his lips—and retain it, too, so long? Why had she looked so deeply interested in what he said? And what was the cause of her present emotion?

Every one had of course been much alarmed; several of the young ladies had fled into the greenhouse, whence they now peeped through the glass door. Lady Morven was near fainting, and Mr. Graham was unable to assist her.

Some one proposed music as the most likely thing to calm Sir Archibald's excited nerves, he was so fond of it. One of the Miss Morvens was prevailed upon to return to the drawing-room and play an air on the piano-forte—it had no effect. Lady Arandale requested Julia to sing; she at first wished much to decline, but Lady Arandale pressed her re-

quest, and Julia felt that it was necessary to consent. Sir Archibald was still walking up and down with hasty and uneven strides, leaning on the arm of Lord Arandale ; Julia's song commenced. Sir Archibald's violent gesticulations gradually became less frequent ; his step, as she proceeded, became slower, his countenance less furiously agitated. By insensible degrees he approached, and, at length stood with folded arms, immediately before our heroine.

Julia exerted, on this occasion, but a small share of the power of voice which she possessed ; yet, every one was delighted with the magical effect the then state of her own feelings gave to a pathetic air. By the time the song came to its conclusion, Sir Archibald was standing almost directly beneath the great centre lustre, just so far removed from its

immediate perpendicular, as to admit of its strong flood of light streaming full on his face and figure. His attitude was still the fixed one in which he had hitherto listened, but now he seemed unconscious of the presence of any one. His perfectly white hair was made more remarkable by the brightness that shone upon it; his countenance was calm, every passion being stilled, every effort laid aside, while an expression of woe, of hopelessness, such as can proceed only from the utterly broken heart, had settled on every thus relaxed feature, and large tears, which glittered in the strong light, were silently rolling over his cheeks.

An absolute stillness reigned throughout the apartment for some moments, when, supper being announced, it was agreed, almost in

whispers, that they should retire quietly to the eating room without disturbing Sir Archibald; leaving a servant at the drawing-room door to observe his movements.

CHAPTER IX.

“The hell informed passion, avarice.”

“REALLY,” said Lady Morven, as she lolled back in her seat at the supper table, after asking Mr. Graham to help her to some wine and water, “my nerves can’t stand such alarms! and I dare say you are quite ill too, Mr. Graham.”

“This is the first time Sir Archy has shewn symptoms of violence,” observed Lady Arandale, “hitherto he has been quite harmless, an object more of commiseration than of fear.”

“ I must, I believe,” said Lord Arandale, “ be under the necessity of requesting my nephew, Mr. St. Aubin, to take a few days sport with some of the neighbouring gentlemen, while Sir Archibald remains here ; for never shall my door,” and he spoke with the honest energy of good feeling, “ be closed against the shattered remnant, in mind and in body, which still exists of poor Oswald—the once gay companion of many a merry, many a thoughtless hour, spent, some of them beneath his own hospitable roof, where, even I, may have possibly, though innocently, contributed my share to his ultimate ruin !” Then, addressing our hero in particular, he continued, “ At the age of fifteen he was his own master, and at that early period commenced the career of folly, dissipation, and gaming which led, finally, to his destruction. St. Aubin was one

of the set," he proceeded, lowering his tone ; " it was he who drew him into high play, and who won from him the principal part of his estates, unfairly too it is generally believed. There was some agreement also, about the winner paying the loser's then existing debts ; but when St. Aubin got possession he sold the estates, or his interest in them, to Jews, and disappeared, leaving Oswald to answer his creditors as he might. There were informalities in the sale, it is thought ; but however that is, or was, the Jews keep possession, and Oswald has not a title or paper of any kind to shew : St. Aubin, on various pretexts, had got all into his own hands. Poor Oswald's state of mind, too, adds greatly to the difficulty of clearing up any part of the unfortunate business. In some of his ravings he declares vehemently that he staked but his own

life use, and that, could he find the villain St. Aubin, and make him produce certain papers, his boy, (Oswald's boy I mean,) would enjoy the whole property at his father's death."

CHAPTER X.

“ And are ye gone indeed, ye happy hours,
 When our course in the chace was one; when we
 Changed the words of love beneath thy shadiest
 Woods, Oh Cromla ?”

JULIA entered her room, arm and arm with Frances, pondering in what words she should ask a certain question, which she meant to put to her sister, as soon as Alice should retire; for Henry's remarks had aroused again some of the painful suspicions, which Edmund's soothing attentions had so lately laid asleep.

Frances made many droll critiques in French

on Lady Morven, Mr. Graham, &c. &c. Forced, unmeaning smiles were Julia's only replies.

At length, both the sisters' heads were laid on their downy pillows, and Alice had left the room. Still Julia had not determined in what precise words to put her important question; besides, though the candles had been extinguished, there happened to be an impertinent bit of trundling coal among the embers of the fire, which sent from its side a bright flickering blaze, and caused a most obtrusive light to enter the bed, by means of a small, neglected opening between the foot curtains; and, until it should be quite dark, Julia did not wish to speak.

Frances put her arms about her sister's neck, kissed her, and bade her good night. Julia returned the good night with equal kindness,

as was their custom. She was again silent. At last the blaze went out, and the room became nearly dark.

“What—was that—you were saying—to me—when we were dressing for dinner, Frances—about—about Edmund, you know?”

“What!—What?”—said Frances, with a start, for she had just dropped asleep.

“What—was it you were saying—I say—before dinner, you know?”

“Saying! About what?”

“About—about Edmund, you know.”

“What about Edmund?”

“Oh, you know, about him and Lady Susan, you know.”

“Oh, about their going to be married!” said Frances, rousing herself to enter fully, as it were, into the amusing subject; then, with animation, and a voice of confidence, she con-

tinued, "I really think it will take place ; and he is certainly very fortunate ; for she has a cheerful, happy temper, and her affection for him is truly generous and disinterested !" The darkness covered Julia's changing colour, and her starting tears, also, which she now gulped down, as she replied, "Her affection indeed ! What can her affection be, in comparison of those who have loved him always !"

"Do you mean any one in particular ?" asked Frances.

"No—" replied Julia, "that is—yes. I mean, you and I, you know." "Certainly," said Frances, "we have loved him always ; but then, you know, we are not going to marry him."

"No, I suppose papa would not think it right, if we were," said Julia.

"You may be sure of that !" replied Frances.

“It is very plain, from his letters, and from what grandmamma and Mr. Jackson said the other day, about Henry’s nonsense, what sort of people papa intends us to marry.”

“I shall never marry any one while I live !” said Julia, with great earnestness.

“You can’t tell, you know, Julia,” replied Frances ; “you may happen to fall in love ; and if you do, it will be desperately ! for you know how enthusiastic you always are, about any one you care for !”

“Fall in love with a stranger, indeed !” exclaimed Julia. Then, after a momentary pause, she added, “do you think yourself, Frances, that Lady Susan can possibly love him as well as—as we do ?”

“Why, I dare say,” replied Frances, “if any thing should prevent their being married, that Lady Susan would forget him by and bye,

whereas you and I shall always have the same regard for Edmund, that we have had for him all our lives. But, on the other hand, there is Lady Susan going to waive all about his unknown birth, that some people, you know, are so ill natured about. She says, his own nobility is more to her, than any he could derive from all the ancestors that ever were in the world."

"Did she say so to you, Frances?" asked Julia.

"Yes," replied her sister, "and she is going, she says, to give him, most cheerfully, her hand, her heart, and her fifty thousand pounds, in preference to many of the first young noblemen in the kingdom, among whom she might choose; and you and I are not going to do all that for him, you know!"

Julia sighed heavily, and made no immediate

reply.—In a little time she said, “Do you think, Frances, you could do so much for Edmund?”

“Why, I don’t know,” replied Frances ;
“though I certainly love Edmund next to you and grandmamma, yet I have no particular wish to be married to him ; for I can love him just as well, you know, when he is married to Lady Susan. But you, Julia, who were always so enthusiastic, would you like now to sacrifice so much for him?”

“I could do any thing for those I love!” said Julia, in a scarcely audible whisper, and blushing, though none could see her.

“Oh, that is, you mean, if it were absolutely necessary to their happiness !” rejoined her sister. “I should not like, either, to make poor Edmund unhappy ! But then, you know, it is not necessary to his happiness; for he wishes himself to be married to Lady Susan.”

“ But are you sure of that, Frances ?” asked Julia, as recollections crowded in upon her mind, “ are you sure of that ? for I am certain it is impossible for him to love Lady Susan, or any one, as much as—as he loves—that is, seems to love—those he has always loved.”

“ I know,” said Frances, “ that there cannot be a more amiable or affectionate disposition in the world than Edmund’s ; yet, still he never showed me any such excessive sort of love, that he could not love another person as well, or better, I suppose, if he were going to be married to them ! But, to be sure, you were always his favourite. I remember when we were children I used to be vexed at it sometimes, but since we have been grown up, I don’t mind people loving you best, because I know you deserve it.”

Julia wept on her sister's breast, and persuaded herself that her tears were those of gratitude and tenderness, caused by Frances' kind expressions. In a little time she said, "But how are you sure, Frances, that Edmund wishes to be married to Lady Susan?"

"Because he asked her to marry him, when they were in the cottage this morning! She told me so herself, just before I came up to dress for dinner, you know." Julia asked no more questions; nor did she utter another word that night. Frances went on explaining about Lord and Lady Arandale knowing nothing of the matter, as yet, and what Lady Susan meant to do to obtain their consent, &c.; but having the conversation all to herself, she soon began to articulate slowly and with frequent unnecessary pauses, and, finally, fell asleep: upon which, Julia began to draw her hitherto

suppressed sighs audibly. She wept for a time with bitterness. She thought for hours. When she recollected looks or words of tenderness she wept afresh ; but, when she called to mind such circumstances as Edmund's having, at any time, taken her hand in his, or pressed it to his lips, she blushed till her cheeks seemed to burn, and wondered how she could ever have permitted any thing so very wrong : she had always called him brother Edmund, certainly ; but she ought to have remembered that he was not really her brother. She then asked herself the following startling questions :—If her feelings for Edmund and her conduct towards him had hitherto been guided by the friendship of a sister, why should they not be still the same ? what change had taken place in their relative situations ? This candid mode of treating the subject puzzled her not a little. At length she

tried to persuade herself that friendship, or even sisterly regard for one who loved their friend or sister better than any one else in the world, was a very different thing from friendship for one who felt a stronger affection for some other object. “ And does Edmund, then, really love Lady Susan better than he loves me ?” Her tears now flowed again, and, wearied out, she fell asleep, without having come to any conclusion but that she was wretched, and that all the recollections which, hitherto, had given her pleasure, now gave her pain.

As soon as reason had abdicated her seat, fancy ascended the throne. Confusion succeeded, and the busy turmoil of weary imaginings, and painful contrarieties, robbed sleep of her healing balm. Wanderings alone on starless nights—Dreary wildernesses in the blaze of noon, without one living object to be seen—

Crowded ball-rooms—Edmund leading Lady Susan past to join the dance, with a countenance so changed, so cold ; and all interspersed with short glimpses of Lodore and happy childhood : till, at length, by the time she ought to have been awaking in the morning, her dream (*not* from “foregone conclusions,” but from outward causes,) took the following form. She thought she saw Edmund and Lady Susan coming towards her in one of the shrubby walks at Arandale. She tried to avoid them, but could scarcely move an inch at a time. They overtook her. Edmund, she thought, to her utter astonishment, put one arm round her, and drew her towards him ; while the other, she now perceived, was around Lady Susan. Amazed at this audacious freedom, and especially indignant at such partnership in love, she struggled to free herself, and, with almost a bound,

awoke. Arms really were around her, laughing eyes were close to her's, and a soft voice named her. But it was that of Frances, who had, all this time, been trying every means, but hitherto in vain, to awake her sister ; so heavy was the late sleep induced by the anxious thoughts of the night, and the busy dreams of the morning. Indeed it was not quite two hours since Julia had first closed her eyes.

“ Bless me,” cried Alice, as she entered the room, “ can that be the bagpipes for breakfast, and it has only just gone ten ! Well, I thought my Lady Arandale would have taken a sleep this morning, after being up a matter of half the night.”

“ Were we so much later than usual then ?” asked Frances.

“ Much as common, my Lady,” replied Alice ;
“ but when the men went in to take the supper

things away, my Lady and my Lord, both, were so busy with Mr. Edmund, Captain Montgomery, I should say, that they were sent away again, and not rung for, for two hours. I wish all may be true that was said in the hall," she recommenced, after having assisted her young ladies to dress for some time in silence; "for Mr. Edmund is one that every body loves; and I, for one, should rejoice in his good luck—and think it nothing so strange, neither; though the old butler put himself in such a passion, and said that Lady Susan was a wife for the first duke in the land—and—"

"I have told you before, Alice," said Julia, making an effort to conceal her real feelings under the mask of pettishness, "that you are not to repeat the conversations of the hall-table in our room."

"I beg pardon, my Lady, but I only meant

to say as how my Lady Arandale came to be late. But I am sure I repeated nothing : neither what my Lady Susan's maid said, nor what my Lady Arandale's maid said, nor what my Lord's man said, about the time they were at Lodore, nor all I said myself about the power of money that Mr. Edmund had won from the French, and about what a nice, handsome young gentleman he was ; —but for just a kind wish for one that every one loves, I didn't think it would have given offence."

" You can never give offence by wishing well to any one, Alice," said Frances, " but it was not necessary to repeat what other servants said : that was all. I suppose," she added, in an under tone to her sister, as they went down stairs together, " he was asking papa and

mamma's consent, last night. And after his fine resolutions, too !” she added, laughing, “never to think of marriage till he had discovered all about his birth, name, and so forth.”

CHAPTER XI.

“ She will wait in vain thy return.”

At breakfast, Sir Archibald was again the subject of conversation. “ He is still late to his breakfast,” said Lady Arandale, “ and when he does come he will tack but one cup o’ coffee, without sugar, cream, or bread ; so totally have his excesses destroyed his stomach !”

“ How dreadfully broken down he is in appearance, since I last saw him !” observed the General.

“ Well,” said Lord Arandale, “ poor Os-

wald was once, I think, the handsomest fellow in Scotland ! Do you remember how well he used to sing, General ?”

“ His voice is still peculiarly melodious,” said Lady Susan, who was looking as grave as she had done at dinner the day before ; though Edmund was seated next to her, and, seemingly, paying her very solicitous attention.

“ How poor Maria could have given St. Aubin the preference,” continued his lordship, “ I cannot imagine ; Oswald, however, married a very elegant woman—one of the Ladies Allan. Your friend, Lord Fitz-Ullin’s first wife,” he added, turning to Edmund, “ was one of the sisters. The Fitz-Ullin family seem to have modelled their conduct towards poor Lady Oswald, by that of her own more immediate relatives : indeed it is not improbable that they

may have by this time forgotten her very existence ; for the death of her sister, and Lord Fitz-Ullin's second marriage, have, for many years, sundered the connecting link : while a feeling of pride, very natural, I allow, but which Lady Oswald certainly ought to have sacrificed to the good of her child, has hitherto, I apprehend, prevented her making any direct claim on their notice."

The mention of Lord Fitz-Ullin's family as connected with the Oswalds, made a lively impression on Edmund's mind. That the friendless, destitute boy, whom he had been planning to protect and assist with all the limited means he could command, should possess legitimate claims on his powerful and kind patron, and on his young friend, Oscar Ormond, opened new and flattering prospects for the son of poor Sir Archibald, of which

Edmund was determined not to lose sight. The friendless, the destitute seemed to him as more peculiarly his brethren than the rest of mankind. Nor was this a parade of sentiment with Edmund, even to his own heart ; it was rather an involuntary emotion, upon the impulse of which he frequently acted before he had considered what were his motives. His affectionate and gentle nature yearned for the tender family sympathies of which his peculiar circumstances deprived him ; and he sometimes took a melancholy pleasure in thinking that he thus belonged to a large family, namely, the unfortunates. Henry entered the breakfast-room looking very pale.

“ There is no one missing now but poor Sir Archibald,” observed Lady Arandale. The butler came in with a supply of hot rolls. Her ladyship enquired if any one had been in

Sir Archibald's room this morning. The man answered that he believed Sir Archibald had left the castle, as he had gone out very early. "If he has gone off in this sudden manner," observed Lord Arandale, "it is probable that a lucid interval has arrived; for at such times he always hastens to his miserable retreat in the island; avoiding most especially those old friends and associates whose society he seeks when his mind is in an unsettled state. I do not know that I have ever seen on his countenance that expression of utter woe, unmingled with cheating phantasies, which it wore last night, except on the approach of reason; before which it is feasible to suppose that all the airy visions of the madman flee away, reducing our poor friend to the unalleviated consciousness of his actual situation. Young men!" continued the Earl, looking

round at his nephews, who were busily engaged in eating cold pie, “surely I need not, no one need preach against gambling in this neighbourhood while such a beacon light is placed on high to warn all off the rock on which poor Oswald became a wreck! Aye, a piteous wreck indeed!” he added, murmuring to himself, and moving his head slowly from side to side, as Mrs. Montgomery sometimes did, for it was a family symptom. Then, after a moment’s pause, addressing Edmund in particular, he said: “This will make some little alteration necessary in the arrangements we concerted last night. You have breakfasted, I believe, Captain Montgomery?” Edmund assented. “Will you come with me, then, to my study?” Edmund arose and accompanied his lordship. Most of the party quitted their seats about the same time; and Frances said

to Julia, as they walked together towards a window: "It seems Edmund has got over all his mighty objections to matrimony!"

"Yes—they are in a wonderful hurry, it would appear," said Julia. "But what can Sir Archibald's going away have to do with their arrangements?"

"I cannot imagine," replied Frances. "Perhaps Edmund is about to turn out to be Sir Archibald's son."

"Sir Archibald's son, you know," returned Julia, who had inwardly studied the subject in all its bearings, "is mentioned as a boy; besides, he is living with Lady Oswald in the Isle of Man; and never was lost or found in infancy, as Edmund was."

"That is true!" answered Frances, "that won't do—but he must be some way related to

Sir Archibald, (for what my uncle said, must mean something,) and in that case, I dare say, they will consent to the marriage.”

Julia looked at Lady Susan, and again wondered why she did not look happy.

“That is a good lad, that Captain Montgomery,” observed Lady Arandale. (Lad is a term applied by elderly Scotch ladies to all men of all sizes and ages, not quite as old as themselves.) “He has made a good sum of money, it seems,” continued her ladyship, “and will make a very good use of it, I dare say.” Lady Susan coloured slightly, and told Henry he had eaten no breakfast. “Are you all prepared for the race-course, young ladies?” inquired Lady Arandale. “We had better arrange how the carriages shall be filled.

“There is my barouche for any one that likes,” said Lady Morven, “for I shall positively go in the curricie with Graham.”

“We can accommodate two ladies,” said Julia, “if Henry and Captain Montgomery ride.” It was the first time she had named Edmund, Captain Montgomery, and the sound of her own voice pronouncing the words, startled her.

“There is no scarcity of carriages, my dear,” replied Lady Arandale; “there is my barouche, and my lord’s chariot, and the family coach, and the General’s barouche, and all the young men’s curricies and nondescripts; I only mean to plan how the several parties may like best to be disposed of. As for my Lady Morven’s barouche, I advise that none who regard their necks may trust themselves with her horses.”

“La ! ma’am,” interrupted Lady Morven, “who would drive any thing but blood-horses !”

“I fancy, my dear,” returned Lady Arandale, “my Lord drives as good horses as your ladyship ; though they are not mad ones ! It was but the last races, you know, that one of your ladyship’s leaders killed an unfortunate boy.”

“I beg your la’—ship’s pardon a thousand times,” observed Mr. Graham, “but that certainly was the boy’s own fault.”

“How so, pray ?”

“Why, the boy should have staid at home, and, I will venture to affirm, that Lady Morven’s leader would never have hurt him ! Really such creatures should keep themselves from under the feet of people of fashion.”

“It happened on the king’s highway,” retorted Lady Arandale, “and people of fashion

have no right to infest that with animals dangerous, or even inconvenient, to the poorest of his Majesty's subjects. And as for my Lady Morven, if she takes my advice, she will appear on the ground in my barouche, rather than in an open carriage with any gentleman."

"La ! ma'am," cried Lady Morven, "if I had used my own barouche, I should have sat in the dicky seat with Graham, and made him drive !"

"Well, my dear, if your husband chooses to give you your own way," said the old lady, "I shall not interfere."

"I give Morven his own way, and he gives me mine. That's all fair, you know."

Lady Arandale, without vouchsafing further reply, desired her daughter and nieces to get ready, as the carriages would all come round in half an hour.

CHAPTER XII.

. . . . "Teach my youth to mix with heroes."

MEANWHILE we shall just step into the library, and see what Lord Arandale and Edmund have been about.

"We may now, I believe, consider matters settled," remarked his lordship, as he folded a letter, which Edmund having perused, had just returned to him. "I know what are her ladyship's wishes, and I can, I think, answer for her cheerful consent. Indeed, she will, I make no doubt, rejoice in having found such a friend and protector for her child."

“ Your lordship’s good opinion is truly flattering !” replied Edmund, “ and I hope, when the well being, and I may, perhaps, say happiness through life, of a young and innocent being, are committed to my keeping, I may not undertake the charge, with light or careless ideas of its responsibility.”

So, as Frances would say, they really are going to be married !

“ With your principles, Captain Montgomery, there can be little doubt of your fulfilling well any duties you take upon yourself. If the boy is tolerably well disposed, he has every chance, in such hands, of turning out an honour to his profession : though it can fall to the lot of but few to adorn it quite as brilliantly as Captain Montgomery has done !”

Lord Arandale is speaking of young Oswald, Sir Archibald’s boy ; and the letter which he

has just finished folding, he is, we perceive, now directing to Lady Oswald, the boy's mother. In fact, Edmund had applied to his lordship the night before, for the purpose of having it thus arranged. He felt a delicacy, as a total stranger, in obtruding his offers of service on Lady Oswald, and had requested Lord Arandale to take, (on the plea of his long friendship for Sir Archibald,) nominally, the lead in the business, by addressing a letter to her ladyship, saying, that he had now an opportunity of placing her son in the *Euphrasia* frigate, commanded by Captain Montgomery ; and stating that the attending circumstances were particularly favourable, as young Oswald would thus have an opportunity of forming a desirable intimacy with his cousin, Lord Ormond, who was the particular friend of Captain Montgomery ; and of becoming

personally known to Lord Fitz-Ullin, who, it could not be doubted, would take an interest in the advancement of so near a connexion, when thus placed within the sphere of his observation. On the strength of a lady not understanding those matters, the gentlemen ventured to enclose a bank bill for a moderate sum, as advance of pay to Mr. Oswald for his fitting out.

CHAPTER XIII.

“ Bright are his yellow locks and sparkling eyes,
And beaming features all, in the fair glow
Of youth.”

THE letter being despatched, Lord Arandale and Edmund rejoined the ladies who were collecting in the drawing-room. Edmund looked into every recess of every window, and cast a glance over every group, but evidently saw not the object of his researches. He passed on to the greenhouse, and at length discovered Julia and Frances collecting some flowers. He went towards them, offering to assist them ; for he

had been so much engaged with Lady Susan and Lord Arandale during breakfast, that he had scarcely spoken to Julia that morning.

“How is it possible,” said Frances, laughing, “that amid your important arrangements, you can spare time for an occupation so trifling?”

“Our important arrangements, as you call them,” replied Edmund, smiling in his turn, “are all completed.”

“Indeed!” said Frances, “and papa and mamma’s consent obtained?”

“Why! what do you know about it, Frances?” asked Edmund, with some surprise, and colouring at the idea that his benevolent purpose should be thus made public.

“Oh, we know quite well, I assure you,” she replied playfully.

“Let me do that for you, Julia!” said Ed-

mund, starting forward to assist her he named, in plucking a branch of geranium, which she was very awkwardly attempting to reach.

“ Good Heavens, Julia ! what is the matter ? ” he exclaimed, catching up her hand ; for in presenting the flower he had just pulled, he perceived that her countenance expressed the utmost wretchedness ; and that her tears, in despite of an evident struggle to suppress them, were falling fast. She turned away, drew her hand forcibly out of his, and hurried to a further part of the greenhouse. He thought of the hand he had seen her give to Henry ; permit him to retain so long, and even raise to his lips ; and a vague sensation of pain and dread came over him. He followed her, however ; he found her hastily drying her eyes. Again she endeavoured to avoid him.

“ I have no right,” he said, detaining her,

“to demand your confidence, Julia ; perhaps, I am guilty of impertinence in thus seeking it—withhold it, if it must be so ; but do not make me miserable, by seeming not only unhappy, but seriously offended with me !” His voice and manner renewed Julia’s habitual feelings of tenderness.

“I have no desire to make you miserable, Edmund ! I wish you, sincerely wish you all happiness,” she replied, in a scarcely audible voice “but do not speak to me now ; do not speak to me, just now !”

He endeavoured to take her hand, and was about to reply ; but she shrunk from his touch, and hastened, as for refuge, into the midst of the company in the drawing-room. He followed, and stood near her in silence. Frances had quitted the greenhouse, as soon as she made her laughing speech to Edmund, and, conse-

quently, without perceiving her sister's emotion.

At this moment Colonel Murray, of the Moorlands, was announced. He led by the hand a fine boy of about twelve or thirteen ; with fair, curly, glossy hair ; fair skin, glowing cheeks, soft hazel eyes, and a sweet open expression of countenance ; the mouth and smile, as was afterwards universally observed, very like Edmund's. He was dressed in the uniform of one of the Highland hunts, and carried in his hand a cap and plume, like young Norval's.

"This is Arthur Oswald, the son of our friend Sir Archibald," said the Laird, presenting him to Lord Arandale.

"Indeed !" cried his lordship, taking the boy's hand, and glancing a look towards Edmund, which was answered by one of intelligence on his part. "I am truly happy to see

him—fine little fellow! How did you leave your mamma, my dear? Well, I hope?”

“She was quite well when we came away,” he answered, “but that’s a good while now.”

The Laird explained, that Arthur had been brought over to the mainland by his father, who had left him at his, the Laird’s house, since his first arrival. The Laird added, that he was taking Arthur with him to the races, and had called at Arandale, for the purpose of joining himself, if permitted, to their agreeable party. He might have said, further, but of course he did not, that he had furnished Arthur with the becoming dress he wore on the occasion. Every one noticed the young stranger in some kind or complimentary manner; and Lord Arandale, presenting him particularly to Edmund, asked him if he should like to be a

sailor. The boy answered, with quickness and energy, that he should indeed.

“Then, this gentleman,” said the Earl, “will take you with him, and teach you to be a sailor; and a good and a great one, if you follow his example.”

“Edmund had already taken Arthur’s hand, drawn him towards him, and seemed as it were, to appropriate him. The boy now looked up in his face, as if for a confirmation of what Lord Arandale had said. Edmund smiled kindly; and Arthur answered the smile by that genuine mark of a child’s confidence, a soft pressure of the hand that held his. Edmund felt at the moment, notwithstanding the strangeness of Julia’s manner, that it was impossible to be quite miserable, while one has the power of doing any good. This pleasurable impulse

called up the natural ambition of the heart to be happy ; and, scarcely conscious why, he turned to Julia, but found, what he had never found before this morning, that he could not meet her eye. He moved a step or two, which brought him near her. He addressed some remark to her ; she answered without looking up, affecting to be very busy searching for something in her reticule.

It must have been, thought Edmund, the imprudence with which I last night betrayed my feelings, which has thus, upon serious consideration, offended her ; though, at the time, she did not, certainly, show displeasure. And he sighed heavily. She now raised her eyes, with involuntary quickness, to his face. She had never seen so much unhappiness there. She looked at him, for the space of a second, with a mingled expression of surprise and ten-

derness, which he could in no way comprehend. Edmund stooped, and, on pretence of looking over her shoulder out of a window facing which she stood, he whispered softly :—" I see, Julia, that the presumption of my manner, last night, has offended you ; justly, I allow ; but have some compassion for an involuntary error ! Some pity for—for——" The low and hurried accents of Edmund ; the confused state of Julia's own feelings ; the busy voices of the rest of the party ; all prevented her hearing more than a few occasional words, from which she collected, only, that Edmund saw her change of manner, and sought to know the cause. This, of course, she could not explain. " Soon, I must return to sea," he continued, finding he could obtain neither look nor word ; " for what foreign station, or for how many years, I know not ! Possibly, I may never see

you again, Julia. Do not, then, by a resentment so determined, so unforgiving, embitter the few short moments to which I would fondly cling, as the only solace of my solitary, and hopeless existence !” This last sentence, which, from the growing warmth of his manner, was uttered in a somewhat more audible tone than the rest, was all that Julia had distinctly heard.

“Your solitary and hopeless existence, Edmund !” she exclaimed, with a look and voice of astonishment.

“Yes, Julia ; such feelings as mine must be hopeless ! it is the only apology that can be made for their presumption.”

“Lord Arandale has refused his consent,” thought Julia, “and shall I add to his evident affliction ? I imagined him perfectly happy ! and that he had found means to be so, independent of all his first friends ; or I could

never have been so unkind to him." At the conclusion of this reflection, she looked up with an expression that, for a moment, almost restored him to happiness.

The company were now filing off, on their way down to the carriages. Edmund and Julia were the last in the room. She paused, gave him her hand, and said :—"I once promised you to be always your friend ! I renew that promise now ; and I know I can also answer for the unshaken continuance of Frances's kind regard. Will this, in any degree, console you, Edmund, under those mortified and disappointed feelings, of which you speak so bitterly ?" And she spoke a little bitterly herself.

"Oh, yes ! It will—it must—it does !" he exclaimed, pressing the offered hand to his lips. She drew it gently away ; but took his arm as they followed the rest of the party. If

he considered it so very wrong even to hope, she thought, why did he ask her to marry him? and Lady Susan, herself, had told Frances that he had done so.

Edmund was, or at least believed that he ought to have been, cheered in one point of view; for Julia appeared to be reconciled to him, appeared to have pardoned his rashness: but, he was saddened too: indeed, there was a peculiar dreariness about his present feelings; for it now seemed to him, that they fully understood each other, and that Julia had forbid him to hope. Yet, he thought, he had never hoped. What was it, then, of which he now deplored the loss? Some undefined, unacknowledged expectations, must have been founded on the pleasure he had so often, with intoxicating delight, marked in Julia, when he had, by look or word, betrayed some part of

that love, he thought it his duty not to declare; till his birth should be distinctly ascertained; a contingency which, when put in high spirits by a smile, he had, sometimes, thought by no means improbable! Now, Julia knew, (he believed,) the full extent of his love; and she had showed any thing but gratification. She had, it is true, mingled with her displeasure at his presumption, a generous compassion for his sufferings; and she had offered him, mournfully, but kindly, friendship as a consolation for the hopelessness of the passion she had yet decidedly checked. And was not Julia's friendship an inestimable treasure? Was he not an object of regard, of affection to her?—Oh, how delightful that idea; were it not blasted by the thought, that he must, one day, see her bestow warmer, dearer, fonder feelings on another! on some one, who having

all else that this world can give, must have their abundance crowned by the bliss of possessing Julia's love ! Or should she ever be Henry's ? He looked on her as he asked himself this question ; but he thought of the mountainous waves of the sea in a storm, and, for a moment, felt the sinful wish that he might be overwhelmed by them, ere so terrible an apprehension should be realized !

Julia, as she descended the stairs, and stepped into the carriage, wondered how Edmund could love a comparative stranger, as Lady Susan certainly was, so much as to be rendered thus unhappy on her account : but he was unhappy, and therefore she would never be unkind to him again ! She could not, it was true, have the same pleasure in feeling that excessive friendship for him now, as when she thought her friendship was all the happiness he desired :

yet, if it was all the happiness he possessed, it should never be taken from him.

Before the company quitted the drawing-room for the carriages, a trifling circumstance occurred, which we omitted mentioning in its place. We shall, however, relate it now, as it may hereafter be remembered with interest. At the time that Edmund, as we have already described, moved towards Julia, Henry happened to take up nearly the same relative position with respect to Arthur, which our hero had filled the moment before. The boy, who had not noticed the change, laid hold of the side of Henry's coat, very gently; and having long had the habit of thinking and speaking of his father with a degree both of seriousness and of mystery, on account of his unhappy state of mind, he said in a whisper: "But where is poor papa?"

CHAPTER XIV.

“ They proudly brook the bit and rein, yet yield
The arching neck to page’s soft caress.”

THE carriages, as is the custom at the Ayr races, drove to a stand-house, the upper story of which consists of one large room three sides glass. Here all the female part of the best company collect, while the gentlemen, in general, at least the younger ones, ride about the course, and, from time to time, join their parties in the stand-house, fraught with intelligence respecting the horses, &c. All was new

to the sisters. Every equipage that drove up, produced enquiries as to who those were descending from it, &c.

“ Blair is riding this way, I see,” said Colonel Morven to Frances, “ he is going to behave prettily, and hand Mrs. Blair and his daughter out of the carriage. Mrs. Blair is a very charming woman !”

“ Which did you say was Mr. Blair ?” asked Frances.

“ Mr. !” repeated the Colonel, “ pray do not insult my friend Blair, by calling him Mr. ! we have no such appellation among our Scotchmen of any consequence.” “ What, then, is his title ?” demanded Frances. “ No actual title.—He is Blair of Blair—the head of an ancient family, and must not be mister’d like a nobody !” Another barouche drove up. “ Here comes Auchencru’s carriage,” said the

Colonel. "Is that Mrs. Auchencru stepping out now?" asked Frances. "Mrs. Oswald," said the Colonel. "Why, did you not say the name was Auchen—— something?" "The name of Oswald's place is Auchencru, and, in Scotland, you must always call men by the names of their places;—not so their ladies." "I see I must never speak to or of any one while I am in Scotland!" cried Frances.

"Oh! who is that?" said Frances, now directing his attention towards a remarkably handsome young man, who was riding past. The same person was, at the same moment, pointed out to Julia by Lord Arandale, who had been describing the company to her. "That is," said the Earl, "the Marquis of H——. Now, Julia," he added, laughing, and lowering his voice, "that would be a conquest worthy of those beautiful eyes!"

Julia scarcely perceived the person pointed out : her beautiful eyes, as her gallant uncle was pleased to call them, were following the figure of our hero, as he rode with a group of other young men. She was well accustomed to Edmund standing before her, sitting beside her, or leaning on the back of her chair ; and, to looks and whispers, dangerous enough in such situations ; but Edmund at a distance, and busily occupied with other objects and other people, was something quite new : she felt, without exactly defining the feeling, as if he were less at her disposal than usual ; yet she thought him handsomer, and more graceful than ever. He did look to particular advantage ; for, though a sailor, he was very fond of riding, had learned well and practised much when a boy, and never since that period missed an opportunity of enjoying an exercise in which he took great delight. He

had also, on becoming possessed of an independent fortune, made a point of procuring first rate horses ; so that the animal he now rode, was one of the finest on the ground.

While Julia was thus observing him, he singled from the group, and galloped across the course at full speed ; the foremost of the many who, as usual, crowded to reach the winning-post in time to witness the result of the heat. “ Who is it ? ” “ Who is it ? ” proceeded from numerous voices. “ A Captain Montgomery,” said one. “ Captain Montgomery,” said another. “ The famous Captain Montgomery ? ” enquired an elderly gentleman, “ he who behaved so well in the engagements of * * * * and * * * * and * * * * with the fleet under Lord Fitz-Ullin ? ” “ The same,” replied a second old gentleman. “ How gracefully he sits his horse ! ” exclaimed a young

lady. "And did you observe," she continued, "when he rode by slowly a little while ago, how very handsome he is?"

"Yes, I saw him at the time you speak of: he leaned one hand on the back of the horse, and looked up at the stand as he was passing. I saw him bow to some ladies in the next window," she added, lowering her voice.

Here the conversation was interrupted by a sudden exclamation of terror from Julia.

We left our hero galloping towards the winning post. Henry had also been attempting to reach the same point from another and a nearer part of the course, and his horse had flung him just at the moment when Edmund came up; so that the latter's immediately leaping down to assist had been mistaken by Julia for his having also fallen. Edmund heard her exclamation, and, looking up, saw the ex-

pression of alarm on her countenance. He knew that he had not been in any danger, nor was he conscious that he had appeared to be so: he could not, consequently, take any part of the compliment to himself. Henry's danger then, he thought, has been the cause of all this agony of dread! He recollected the emotion she had shewn the evening before, when Sir Archibald's violent behaviour had threatened the safety of Henry. As he ascended the stairs of the stand-house, Henry followed close behind, and, the next moment, both the young men were beside Julia. Henry insidiously thanked her in an under tone, but loud enough for Edmund to hear; while she, from a consciousness of the true source of her emotion, coloured deeply, without replying or raising her eyes. This was not lost on poor Edmund; neither was the look cast towards him

by Henry, and which seemed to say, "I see you have discovered our secret : do not betray us !"

The Marquis of H—— now rode towards the stand ; and, looking up, bowed to Lord Arandale, who, addressing Julia in the same jesting strain as before, said, " My poor friend is desperately wounded ! I saw it in that one upward glance."

The Marquis now entered, and on being introduced to our heroine, established himself near her, and began to converse with much ease and grace, while his whole manner evinced the liveliest admiration for his fair companion.

Between the heats it is not unusual for some of the company on the stand to indulge in the variety of a drive round the course. The Arandale party now prepared to do so. With the help of a little manœuvring on the part

of Julia ; such as pretending not to hear the Marquis's " allow me ! " and adjusting her scarf and veil to avoid seeing his offered arm, and totally disregarding all Henry's speeches ; it happened that Edmund, among so many competitors, was the fortunate individual who handed Julia down stairs. As they descended, she said, quite suddenly, " I thought at first, Edmund, that you too had fallen. How glad I was when I saw that you had only leaped down to assist Henry ! " A thrill of joy passed through Edmund's heart. The next moment he was obliged to resign her to the Marquis, who stood at the carriage door handing in the other ladies of the party. But Edmund was again happy ! All his former sources of affliction vanished instantaneously. It seemed as though this last overwhelming flood of fears had carried with it, as it ebbed, all other pain-

ful feelings. She did not prefer Henry to him. She had evidently wished to show that she did not. In this moment of inward sunshine, even the long perspective of futurity looked bright ! Though honour now forbade his seeking the hand of Julia ; though a sense of self-respect forbade her now listening to any avowal of his love ; his birth might yet be proved to equal hers : and then—

These thoughts presented themselves to the mind of our hero as he rode beside the Arundale barouche, an arm leaning on the window, conversing with Julia in the most animated manner, to the great envy of a host of rivals, who were riding before, behind, and beside him ; endeavouring, in vain, to introduce their horses, heads between the spirited animal on which he was mounted and the carriage. Whilst the consequently unequal movements of the said

animal, kept alive a certain interest, an ever dawning though as often repelled anxiety on the countenance of Julia, while she tried to answer his remarks with perfect composure, with which, it must be confessed, he had the barbarity to be delighted.

CHAPTER XV.

“Wherever Fingall lifts his spear, there will
Hidal’n be, and taunt him to mortal strife.”

LORD Arandale, as Lord Lieutenant of the county, took the lead in all that was going forward ; and, desirous to promote the festivity of the scene, he gave to his numerous friends and acquaintance the additional entertainment of a splendid luncheon, laid in tents.

His lordship also made it a point with his whole party, to dine each day at the public ordinary, and attend the ball each evening.

At the door of the hotel, which furnished

the ball-room, Henry contrived to hand Julia out of the carriage, and in consequence he conducted her up stairs. On the way, he asked her to dance with him. She was previously engaged to Edmund, to the Marquis of H—, to Lord Morven, and to several others; for more sets than it was probable she should dance during the evening. This excuse, however, she did not take the trouble of making to Henry, but merely told him, with firmness and some severity of manner, that she would not dance with him, as she felt much offended by the style of conversation he had taken the liberty of adopting towards her, the evening before.

“I tell you what, Julia!” he replied, leading her with much longer steps than she found quite convenient, round the side of the room, which was as yet unoccupied, “I know all

your secrets, as well as if you had thought fit to make me your confidant. I know that you are in love (and you ought to be ashamed of yourself) with this Edmund, this Captain Montgomery, Captain Nobody ! Although, as I told you before, he chooses to prefer Lady Susan Morven, forsooth, to your ladyship ! You had better get Frances to join you, I think ; stop all hands, and see who he'll throw the apple to ! That however is your affair, but this I can tell you, if you treat me with insult on his account, and let such a fellow see that you do so, I know how to be revenged ! and I will be revenged !”

“How dare you, Henry,” said Julia, almost breathless between indignation and mortification, “how dare you address such language to me ! I shall let grandmamma know, and you shall never be allowed to speak to me again !”

“Not quite so fast, madam !” retorted Henry, “you shall say, and you shall do what I please, and only what I please ; or, I repeat it, I’ll have revenge !” She was about to speak again, with a lip, the expression of which already evinced scorn for his threats.

“Hear me !” he continued, preventing her, “you are well aware, Julia, that there are subjects which must be sore ones to Edmund. I will thrust these upon him in the most indelicate manner ; in short, I will insult him, and before other men too, past all endurance ; till I compel him to a quarrel, which shall end by ending one of us ! In such a case, should your favourite escape with life, which is not very probable, he will never be able to shew his face again among our family.” Julia looked up, petrified with horror and astonishment. He answered the look, which had seemed to say,

“Is it possible ?” with, “Yes ! I will do it ;” and his eyes remained fixed on hers, till she shuddered at their unshrinking expression. Yet she felt as if compelled by some spell to continue her gaze meeting his, and suffer him to read every thought that was passing in her mind.

At length, after a painful pause, endeavouring to assume a firmness, which she was far from possessing, she replied, “ I repeat it, Henry. It is not to you that I shall render an account of my conduct. For yourself—merit toleration, (if you can,) and, for peace sake, I will shew it you.”

Henry’s eyes flashed with rage for a moment, then, bowing, he answered with a sneer, “ Lady Julia L. is pleased to condescend !” and, looking at her insolently from head to foot, he laughed with an expression which it was impossible to comprehend, yet which, evi-

dently, had some horrible meaning; and, snatching up her hand, he almost crushed the delicate fingers together ere he again released it; saying, as he did so, "Julia, you little know what is before you! Faith, I cannot help laughing," he continued, "when I think how you shall change your tone one of those days."

At this moment Edmund singled from a group at the further end of the room, and approached. He came to claim Julia's promised hand for the set now forming; and Henry, for this time, walked away without disputing it. How gladly did she take the offered arm of our hero; she literally clung to it. He felt her tremble, and turned towards her with a look of anxious enquiry. She begged him to take her out of the room, and get her a glass of water. No sooner had they escaped the danger of general observation by reaching the gallery, along

which but an occasional straggler passed, than she burst into a passion of tears. She suffered Edmund to take her hand, and even, unconsciously, returned the pressure of his ; as, notwithstanding the painful suspicions renewed by what he had just seen, he tenderly entreated to know the cause of her tears.

“Do not ask me, Edmund ! do not ask me !” was all she was able to say. Edmund was confounded ; for, strange as were all the circumstances, there was, at the moment, an unguarded tenderness in her voice and manner, which seemed to convey almost conclusive evidence of attachment to himself. Yet, was it not Henry who had caused her emotion ? Edmund had observed the deep interest with which they had conversed ; he had seen Henry take her hand, the hand he now held ; and he dropped it at the recollection.

As soon as Julia was able, they returned to the ball-room, Edmund again enduring all the doubts, all the tortures of a passion, debarred from explanation with its object.

They joined the set. The form of our heroine glided along through the mazes of the dance, and was followed by the eyes of the enamoured Marquis of H——, who stood, with folded arms, contemplating the perfection of her figure, the unconscious grace of her movements, the lustre and profusion of her bright hair, the softness of her hazel eye, the mantling glow on her cheek, and the richness and sweet expression of her lips as they smiled, when, from time to time, she answered or addressed her partner ; for, notwithstanding her late agitation, she could not be Edmund's partner, hear his voice, and feel the kindness of his eye, and not smile ! An affection so long

cherished as was hers, an affection which the heart cannot do without, induces, thus, a secret devotedness of every feeling which we are often ashamed of even to ourselves, yet with which we are unable to contend. In short, Julia was already bringing her mind to contemplate, as a species of happiness, the idea of being even a consolation to Edmund. She determined that when she went to her room at night, she would ask Frances, who seemed to be in Lady Susan's confidence, all the particulars about this business between her ladyship and Edmund. He had said that he had no hope, and therefore, at any rate, he was not going to be married to Lady Susan. Julia could, herself also, remain unmarried; and then they could, according to her original plan, love each other as friends all their lives. While these reflections passed across the mind of

Julia, the quadrille concluded, and the Marquis lost not a moment in claiming her promised hand for the next.

He had indeed, at the very first glance, been captivated by her peculiarly luxuriant style of beauty, and he had, subsequently, short as had been the acquaintance, contrived to gaze and meditate himself into a passion of the most absurdly extravagant kind ; while, not admitting a doubt of his own success, he made up his mind, that our heroine should be the future Marchioness of H——; and, accordingly, now led her towards the set, with almost triumphant feelings. These, however, being under the check of perfect good breeding, so far from giving anything offensive to his manners, rather served to render them animated and agreeable. His admiration, too, though so lately excited, was perfectly sin-

cere; and as passion, however transient, while it lasts, speaks with the irresistible voice of nature, his mode of expressing himself could not fail of possessing a certain charm, as he whispered soft speeches, in terms as ardent and unequivocal as the newness of his suit would permit. He was not a little disappointed therefore, at the absolute indifference, nay, almost unconsciousness evinced by Julia's absent manner and languid smile; for she was thinking of Lady Susan, of Edmund, and more than all, of Henry's threats, and what ought to be her own future conduct.

In the course of the evening, the Marquis perceived also, and not without some anxiety, that he was likely to have to contend with a numerous host of rivals; not one of them, 'tis true, was quite his equal either in rank or fortune, but a creature so young as Julia was, might

disregard such considerations. He finally determined therefore to secure Lord Arandale's interest, by letting him know his intentions that very night.

Colonel Morven too, by this time Frances's declared, though by no means her received, admirer, found it not quite so easy to appropriate her hand in the dance, or her ear at the supper table, as he had done while none but the family party were present. In short, the sisters were well known to be joint heiresses to the great estates of Lord L——, and, that such were the settlements, that his lordship could not cut off either of his daughters from an equal share of the inheritance, even if such daughter married in direct opposition to his wishes. In addition to these reversionary charms, it was equally well known, that Julia, in a very few months, would be in actual

possession of her Scotch estate. This property lay in the immediate neighbourhood, its beauties and its value were well known to all. Both the sisters also possessed the not quite valueless though less valuable attractions of youth and beauty ; with the charms of perfect freedom from affectation and perfect newness to life ; for such was the seclusion in which they had been educated, that, till very lately, they had not only never acted a part on life's stage, but never been even spectators of any scene beyond the limit of the fireside circle at Lodore. And here, the dramatis personæ had generally been confined to grandmamma, Edmund, Mr. Jackson, Henry, and themselves, the depth and continuance of Mrs. Montgomery's mourning of the heart having, since the death of Lady L——, nearly excluded all other society.

Can it then be wondered at, if the Ladies L——, with so many circumstances in their favour formed, to the gentlemen at least, the centre of attraction ?

CHAPTER XVI.

“Speak on, Comala trembles, but she hears.”

THE scene of gaiety and flattery had closed for the night. The sisters had retired to rest. Alice and light were dismissed ; and Julia commenced her intended enquiries. But Frances had now little information to bestow. Lady Susan’s first confused and unconnected confidence had been made immediately on their return from the cottage the day before. After they had all dressed for dinner Frances had observed Edmund and Lady Susan conversing for a considerable time apart. Julia also had

observed them. From that time Lady Susan had been an altered creature ; she had not once smiled at dinner. Julia had noticed this also. After dinner Lady Susan had gone alone to her cottage, where she had remained for near an hour. On her return the traces of tears had been visible on her countenance. She had declined entering on the subject, and even requested Frances, who had attempted to introduce it, never again to mention it ; and to bury what she had already told her for ever in her own bosom ! This would certainly look as if she either had, on reflection, thought it prudent to retract her consent to marry Edmund, or been required to do so by her parents.

How many anxious moments had Julia been spared, could Lady Susan have brought herself to confess that her first confidence had been

founded on error ; that Edmund had never meant to declare love for her ; that she had misunderstood him in the interview at the cottage ; and that he had sought a subsequent one to explain, in as delicate terms as he could devise, that his heart was devoted to another. But no such explanation having been made to Frances, it was not in her power to remove her sister's uncomfortable reflections on this point ; while, in addition, Julia had now a new source of uneasiness : Henry's horrid threats having filled her mind with images of terror, which she had neither courage nor knowledge of the world sufficient to brave. She must never again, she feared, venture to reject his conspicuous, and now more than ever hateful attentions with the spirit and decision which her own feelings dictated. She should be compelled henceforth to admit them

with passiveness at least; or, might he not require of her to receive them with seeming pleasure. Had she not that very evening been obliged to submit to his taking her hand from Edmund's arm, and leading her, with a triumphant smile, to the dance; after she had told Lord K., in Edmund's hearing, that she was too much fatigued to dance again? What must Edmund think of this? And Henry, she saw, had no delicacy; for he had always taken pains to make his attentions most remarkable when Edmund was present. Should she complain of his conduct to her grandmother—but if she did, her grandmother could not keep him from quarrelling with Edmund—and, besides, the subject was one upon which, for many reasons, (unless, indeed, there were no other means of preventing danger to Edmund,) she should rather be silent. She

must just only therefore endeavour not to provoke Henry's horrid vindictive temper : though it was so disagreeable to have him always near her, and to have others—that is—other people think, perhaps, that she wished it.

CHAPTER XVII.

..... "Oh! I will
Never sleep again! My waking mis'ry
Were peace to this—and yet it was not sleep."

OUR hero, on his pillow, instead of seeking rest from the hopes and fears, the distracting anxieties of the day, commenced again, in fancy, the busy scene. The undisguised admiration of the Marquis for Julia had awakened new terrors; his addresses would be approved of by all her friends. Edmund shuddered to think of the consequences to which such approval might ultimately lead; yet imagination would

go forward, devising new tortures, till he leaped from his bed, threw open his window, and strove to force his thoughts into some other channel.

The remembrance of the mysterious understanding which seemed to exist between Julia and Henry, next arose like a spectre, and laid its icy grasp on every warm fibre of his heart. The pang, however, was but momentary ; this subject had not yet fastened on each faculty, with the withering, lasting hold it was one day destined to possess. It was reserved for time and absence to weaken the blissful, internal evidence, derived from look, voice, manner ; and to strengthen into certainty and misery every vague suspicion to which any untoward coincidence had ever given birth. At present, the very circumstances necessarily connected with such suspicions, led,

by the association of ideas, to a vivid recollection of some of the latest, and strongest proofs of tenderness, he had himself ever received from Julia. He now dwelt on these, till he yielded again to the delightful hope, that she really loved him, although she had thought it necessary to check his mad declaration of a passion, which could never meet with the sanction of her father. If then she loved him, surely she would not marry another! No, she would reject this Marquis of H——? And, as to Henry, she must have rejected him already! The emotion she had shown when conversing apart with him, must have been occasioned by regret at being obliged to give pain. He therefore returned to his pillow, and busied himself in recalling every look, every word, on which his hopes of being secretly beloved were founded. Fear and doubt vanished, and fancy, for a few

blissful moments, pictured the realization of all his hopes.

But hope, on such a subject, was not consistent with honour, with duty—how then could a virtuous mind cling to it with unalloyed felicity. Conscience spoke, and demanded a sacrifice!—a sacrifice which the heart knew not how to yield! His secret wishes now seemed his accusers; and dear as they had long been, he next strove to deny, even to himself, their actual existence. But the compromise was not accepted; still conscience repeated, that it was his duty to fly a temptation, which he evidently had not strength to resist. Should the discovery of his birth never be made; or, when made, should it not prove such as to give him pretensions to Julia's hand; was it consistent with honour and right feeling, that he should, during the period of uncertainty, en-

deavour to gain her affections—perhaps succeed in so doing ! But this thought again bewildered, again left him incapable of a rational reflection, or a right resolve.

Such is the mental warfare, such the wild rebellion of will, which lays waste the peace of him, who suffers the voice of passion to mingle in the counsels of conscience.

Edmund slept ; still undecided, and in his dreams endured once more a recapitulation of each anxious feeling, and unfinished conflict.

CHAPTER XVIII.

“ Weary not with thy vain words her whose faith
Is Fingall’s.

. Why should these eyes behold it ?”

As the sisters were descending to breakfast, Frances returned up stairs for some violets which Alice had with great difficulty procured for her, and which she had forgotten on her dressing table, while Julia proceeded towards a room their party had occupied the evening before. But on entering and perceiving Henry seated alone reading a newspaper, and no appearance of even preparation for breakfast, she

was about to retire. "You may as well stay where you are, I think," said Henry. "If it was Edmund that was here you would not be in such a hurry to make off." Fearful of irritating him after his alarming threats of last night, poor Julia directed her steps to the furthest removed window, and stood looking out. Henry continued reading for some time. Edmund's voice was heard in the hall calling to a favourite dog. Henry suddenly rose, approached Julia, knelt on one knee before her, and took her hand. She was surprised; for, when alone with her, he was not in the habit of troubling her with any affectation of tenderness; and she was particularly sorry that he had chosen the present moment. Before she could remonstrate, or succeed in disengaging her hand, she heard footsteps; and, looking up, saw Edmund advancing along the

gallery towards the door, which she had left open for the purpose of rendering her unwilling interview with Henry as little of a private one as possible. Our hero looked into the room, hesitated for a moment, and retired. Henry, after throwing a glance over his shoulder, rose carelessly, and, without taking the trouble of explaining his late movement, looked out of the window and whistled. Julia, with tears starting to her eyes, at length assuming courage, said: "Henry, I will not endure this persecution! I will complain to grandmamma, and write to my father too; and you shall not be allowed either to trouble me, or to—to—injure any body else."

"You had better, I think," he replied, "publish to the world your disgraceful attachment to a beggarly upstart—and who, to do him justice, has not sought it. And, as to

either Lord L——, (if he were at home,) or my aunt not allowing me to quarrel with Edmund, (which is, of course, what you mean by —injuring any body else,)” mocking her voice and the hesitation of her manner, “I’d be glad to know how they’d prevent it? I may be called to account afterwards, you think; but I’ve told you before, and I tell you again, that, if I am provoked, no consideration for consequences shall prevent my being revenged at all hazards. As to your ever marrying me or not, you may please yourself; but I shall take devilish good care——”

“You know very well, Henry,” she interrupted, now speaking firmly and scornfully in spite of all her fears, “I never will marry you!”

“I know no such thing!” he rejoined, with a repetition of the laugh and the look which

the evening before had made her shudder, and which now again caused her blood to run cold. “ But I know this,” he continued, “ that you shall never marry Edmund ; and further, that I will not be openly insulted with impunity ; nor will I suffer such a fellow, forsooth, to triumph over me ! So hate me in your heart, if you choose ; but, at your peril, (or rather at his peril,) show it before him ! Recollect that hanging me, (if you could do it,) won’t restore him to life after I have blown his brains out ! Your mother little thought,” he continued, insolently opposing the attempt she was now making to escape his presence by standing between her and the doorway, “ your mother little thought, I say, when she brought in the beggar brat, and washed him, that she was preparing a husband for her eldest daughter !—the Lady Julia L—— !—heiress to thirty-

three thousand per annum ! Worth taking better care of than that, faith ! A windfall for his betters, I can tell him !” Julia could listen no longer : she passed him with a determined effort, and literally fled from the apartment, with, however, the loss of a scarf which Henry caught at as she was departing. Thus concluded poor Julia’s last struggle for liberty : henceforward she never dared to disobey or disoblige her insolent cousin.

CHAPTER XIX.

“ I mourn’d the huntress of Cromla, the sunbeam
Of beauty ; who must no more on our hills appear,
But rise on the waves of the north, to light
The stranger’s hall.”

“ HAVE you any commands to Mrs. Montgomery, my Lord ? ” inquired Edmund, who was writing at a small table, while most of our party were engaged at a larger one with breakfast.

“ Oh yes ! ” said Lord Arandale. “ Pray tell her that I shall send Lauson over to the Craigs : indeed that I shall go there myself, after the races.”

Julia and Frances now entered.

Shortly after, rising and going towards Edmund, he bent over the table and said, in an under tone, “ I wish you would just tell my sister (it will save me a letter, and I am much hurried) that the Marquis of H—— has declared his intention of making proposals for Julia, (in due time,) and that, I think she had better write to Lord L——. I wish he could be at home. Yet, the connexion is so very eligible that all unnecessary delays should be avoided. Julia’s own pretensions, in fact, rank so high, that the peerage affords few that can be termed equal matches for her. Her affections cannot be pre-engaged ?” he added, in a sort of consulting whisper. “ Henry behaves very foolishly ; but, I should hope, there was no attachment on her side. The thing, however, must be put an end to !”

Lord Arandale returned to the breakfast table, and left our hero, as he supposed, writing. Julia was the only person who observed that he remained in the very same attitude, and without the slightest motion, till the carriages drove up. She contrived in the general move, to pass near the table at which he sat, where, pausing a moment, she said, “Are you writing to grandmamma, Edmund?”

He had been quite pale when she first approached, and evidently had not observed her. He started at the sound of her voice, and looked at her without appearing to comprehend the purport of her enquiry, but made no reply. “Are you writing to grandmamma?” she repeated, “because, I wish——” He examined his paper two or three times from top to bottom, and then replied, “I—was——”

Henry came up at the moment, and, offering

to Julia his arm, which she now dare not refuse, hurried her to the carriage. She perceived, with much vexation, that he wore, drawn across his breast, the scarf he had snatched from her. He continued, in defiance of a whispered remonstrance on her part, to sport it for some hours. He knew that Edmund was well aware to whom the scarf belonged. At length, Lord Arandale perceiving what was going on, insisted on the scarf being resigned. The Earl restored it himself to Julia, with a reproachful glance; to which she replied, that the scarf had been both taken and worn without her permission.

“Men seldom take liberties they do not expect will, at least, be pardoned,” replied his lordship, with some severity of countenance.

Why Henry should be thus anxious to have it supposed that he was acceptable to Julia,

while he took so little pains to become really so, is a mystery which time only can solve.

Our hero did not appear on the stand that day ; although he was seen riding at a distance on the course. At the ordinary he went in to dinner without taking charge of any lady. At the ball, indeed, he was again to be found near Julia. After a few languid attempts at conversation, however, he seated himself beside her in perfect silence, till the Marquis of H—— coming towards them with a gay and delighted air, claimed her hand for the first set. She stood up to dance, and Edmund almost immediately left the room.

When Edmund retired that night to his own apartment he took himself severely to task : he could assuredly acquit himself of deliberate efforts, intentions, or even wishes to gain Julia's affections beyond the limit of friendship ; yet

he had in every moment of temptation yielded to intoxicating hopes ; and to attempt to distinguish between such hopes and wilful wishes he found was mere sophistry : he determined therefore to fly without again beholding Julia. As yet, her innocent heart believed all its feelings friendship. She would think him unkind, ungrateful, and forget him, without suffering any of those terrible contentions of spirit which he endured. He dare not sleep, lest he should awake under the dominion of a less virtuous impulse.

Without therefore retiring to bed, even for an hour, he commenced instantly and hastily his preparations for departure, confusedly ruminating the while :—What was he about to do ? Could he leave Julia thus, to the persecutions of Henry, to the persuasions of the Marquis ? and he drew his leg out of the boot

into which it had been half way introduced.— But he was confident, he told himself once more, for the hundredth time, that she had already rejected Henry, and that she would reject the Marquis of H——. His foot again entered the boot top, and, now, completed its descent.

CHAPTER XX.

. “ The troubled night pass’d away,
 And morning returned. The shaggy mountains
 Shew’d their grey heads; the blue face of ocean
 Smil’d, and the white wave was seen tumbling round
 The distant rock. I climbed the narrow path,
 And stood on the cliff’s high brow.”

OUR hero’s sacrifice was not quite so great as he imagined, the ball of the last night being the concluding one, a circumstance he had not considered.

Having written two notes of farewell, one to Lord Arandale, and one addressed to Julia and Frances jointly, our hero left Ayr, just

before daybreak, riding, and without a servant. After forming, we suppose, very proper determinations respecting his route, he unfortunately forgot to communicate his plans to his horse; and, suffering the reins to lay very loosely on the animal's neck, himself fell into a deep reverie.

His Bucephalus, thus left to his own devices, happened to perceive a gap in the boundaries of the high road, which particularly caught his eye, as it not a little resembled the approach to the race-course. He turned in accordingly on a rugged piece of moorland, and looked about him. Nor right, nor left, nor straight before, offered other prospect than a wide extent of close cropped sod, plentifully sprinkled with loose stones, and diversified here and there by pools of water and patches of heath; the horizon every where the only visible boundary;

while on the extreme edge of this monotonous waste, the just risen sun stood in lonely majesty.

Uninteresting as all this may appear, it seemed to please Bucephalus mightily : he made wide his nostrils, snuffed the morning air, twice swung his neck, to try the length of his rein, and then set out at full speed. The road, or rather path he took, pursued a gradual ascent for some time, when suddenly the spirited animal stopped short and snorted, on which, Edmund perceived that he had reached the brow of a hill, or rather edge of a precipice ; whence, looking down an abrupt and wooded descent, a valley presented itself, far below, possessing a species of beauty in some respects peculiar to the spot. A small river or rivulet, ran close beneath the overhanging cliffs which formed the opposite side of the valley. Its

stream varied in breadth ; its banks were rugged and irregular, while its course frequently divided and reunited, forming many of the most picturesque spots, into little islets. On most of these, as well as on many projecting points of the bank, stood, what, from this distance at least, had the appearance of ruined towers : some round, some square, all moss grown ; some bearing small trees on their summits, and in the crevices of their sides, and almost all having their own large old tree or trees, standing close to them. The grassy carpet of the vale was of a green peculiarly vivid. The opposite cliffs were thickly wooded in every aperture ; while, here and there, smooth brows of good pasture land, dotted with grazing cattle, appeared on their summits. The valley at one end opened on an extent of flat country, terminated by a distant chain of moun-

tains ; at the other it admitted a view of the sea, discernible between two bold headlands, the furthest and highest of which was crowned by a single tower, that appeared destined to reign over all those more humbly situated in the vale beneath. Tempted by the beauty of the prospect, though not sufficiently acquainted with the country to know where he now was, Edmund directed his horse to take a rather dangerous looking, very narrow road, which by running along the side of the precipice, lessened the steepness of the footing, while it promised to lead him into the midst of the region he had thus been for some moments contemplating.

As he gradually drew nearer and nearer the curious scene that lay beneath him, and, at length, accomplishing his perilous descent, entered the valley itself, and approached those

objects which he had at first thought were numerous ruins, they in general began to assume somewhat of a different appearance, and, finally, on coming up to each, to his great surprise as well as disappointment, they one by one, proved to be but deep sided, perpendicular rocks ; looking, however, as ancient as though they had in the time of Noah, resisted the retreating waters of the flood, when all more yielding substances had been borne along the narrow channel of the glen, into the sea.

He now crossed the river by means of a single arched bridge, much overhung by the trees of the opposite bank, under the thick cover of which it immediately led. Through this copse he rode for a time and then emerged just at the foot of the headland, the lofty summit of which bore on high that which he could now ascertain to be the only real tower of all he had in

imagination so designated. Rock over rock, with wood between, shelved and projected, till how the building itself was to be reached seemed an impenetrable mystery; there did not appear to be nearly space enough to conquer so perpendicular an ascent by any windings of the road he still pursued. He next passed a lodge-gate, which was opened by a little bare-footed girl, who stretched first the one side on its hinges, then the other, though our hero had meanwhile passed through. At a second gate he demanded if he might pursue his course through what thus seemed to be an approach to some nobleman's or gentleman's place, though, as yet, he could discern no residence. He was answered in the affirmative, and proceeded till, having got round to the further side of the headland, a part of the height of which he had meantime, by a gradual ascent, achieved,

he came suddenly in view of a magnificent castellated mansion, apparently surrounded by an extensive richly wooded and beautifully diversified demesne, some of the grounds of which, on one side, descended by an inclined plane to the sea, and the whole of which had been screened from view during the former part of his ride by the much greater height of the side nearest the valley, on the rocky pinnacle of which, at an elevation far above that of the castle, and surrounded up to its very base by wood, still appeared conspicuous the same single tower which from the first had attracted so much of his notice. Seeing a lad on the lawn, who was employed rolling the newly mown grass, Edmund gave him his horse, demanding to whom the place belonged, and if the family were at home? The lad first stared awkwardly, and when about to reply was prevented doing

so, coherently, by the unruly movements of the animal committed to his charge. Our hero, however, on ascertaining that the family was not at home, without waiting to repeat the former part of his question, turned into a footpath among the trees, which promised to lead in the direction of the said solitary tower.

He soon found himself in a maze of gravel walks and abrupt turnings, the ascent so steep as to be often indispensably assisted by flights of irregular stone steps. On each shelf of the rock, lately so much above his head, his feet now found a path; though one secured from the precipice only by a superabundant growth of shrubs. On the side of the cliff immediately over the sea it was sometimes quite terrific to peep through the slender defences of a honeysuckle or jessamine at the foaming billows dashing in far below on a wild and rocky beach. At

length arrived at the goal of all his labours, he entered the long seen, and, at a distance, formidable-looking tower, and found it fitted up within as a conservatory and well supplied with exotics in full bloom. Of these he plucked, mechanically, a few of the finest blossoms, then sighed and desisted, as the remembrance smote on his heart that he could not now, as he had been wont, present them to Julia. He thrust, however, those he had collected into his own bosom ; he could not throw away what had once been, even in thought, associated with her. Near this building the last of the shelving paths tapered off gradually, till there was no longer footing. The rock rose behind it more than perpendicularly—it overhung ; while, in front, there was now no defence whatever, not a shrub, not so much as a tuft of grass, or even moss, to break the treacherous surface of the polished flint.

On the furthest portion which it was possible to occupy of this perilous spot, was placed a rustic seat ; on this Edmund flung himself, and rested his eyes with a peculiarly desolate feeling on his old friends and companions, the waves of the sea. They seemed pressing after each other, and all, as it were, crowding towards the foot of the steep cliff from the summit of which he thus viewed them. He smiled bitterly : to his distempered fancy they appeared hastening forward to welcome his return amongst them, with a fierce and boisterous species of delight, very uncongenial to the softer emotions in which he had of late so much too frequently indulged.

“ Yes,” he ejaculated, “ the bosom of the deep is indeed my only home ! the wide waste of waters my comfortless domain ! To spread desolation around me with fire and with sword ! to

bring death and misery in my train! to send destruction and despair in the whirlwind before me! these are my daily duties! these my domestic joys!" He paused, then proceeded: "If once there were—friends of the friendless—those who—could—could pity—fate has torn them from me! Nay worse—I must tear myself from them! I must seem ungrateful, unkind—I must teach those who might have loved—to forget me—or—be a villain!" He hastened to add, for certain words in the last sentence were shaking his best resolutions. "Yes, a villain!" he repeated. "Is he less who, wrapped in mystery, without a name, without a home, without a country, would ensnare the innocent affections of one unknowing of the world, unable as yet to judge what may one day be her own appreciation of its honours or even of its prejudices?" After a moment's pause he

pronounced firmly, “ I must never see her more !”

He now sunk back in perfect supineness. All the purposes of existence seemed at an end for him. By his own free will act, he had quitted love and happiness for ever. He felt every power of resistance weakened by the supernatural effort. The image of Julia, hallowed, endeared, like that of a departed friend, presented itself in a new, and, if possible, tenderer light. Were he now, he thought, to behold that smile again, where would be the restraints of duty ? Forgotten ! Utterly forgotten in the tumultuous joy of such a moment ! And had such felicity been his but yesterday ? —Good heavens ! yesterday !—And now !——

Fatigued by contending thoughts, he now strove not to think at all ; at length, as he lay in the reclining position, induced by the languor of

despondency, the dashing of the waves began to sound more distant than before, and a slender creeping plant, which hung from the rock immediately above his head, was, during momentary and flitting visions, mistaken for some part of the rigging of a ship, and then seen no more. In fact, not having been in bed the night before, and having, ever since, suffered great agony of mind, he was now so completely exhausted, that a sort of torpor was gradually taking possession of his senses.

This, after some time, deepened into a sound and refreshing sleep, which lasted for several hours. Towards the end of his protracted slumber, our hero began to dream that he was in heaven. Yet, sublimely as he had sometimes conceived of the glories of that abode of the blessed, he could see nothing but clear sky every where ; not even the angels, though he

heard them singing, (one of Julia's songs too,) and, precisely with her voice. The voice ceased; and then the general music of the spheres seemed to arise all round him ! By degrees he became sensible that the music was real ; and that his eyes, which had been for some seconds partly open, were gazing upwards at the bright blue sky, which from the circumstance of his lying on his back, was necessarily unvaried by any other object. He started to his feet a little too suddenly, considering the dangerous position he occupied, and of the particular nature of which he had, at the moment, no precise recollection. Fortunately, however, being uncommonly active, by a powerful effort, and a snatch at the creeping plant before mentioned, he was enabled to recover his balance. He observed where he was, called to mind the wanderings which had brought him there, and

acknowledged to himself, that he must have slept. So far mysteries were cleared up. But the music he still heard, and now he assuredly was awake ! He walked a little way, in various directions, in the hope of discovering the musicians ; but from the effect produced by the circular form of the rock, the occasional waftings of the breeze, and the mazy labyrinth of the paths, it was impossible for him to decide whether he approached, or retreated from the sounds.

After descending, however, till he was two or three shelves lower, it became evident that the swell of wind instruments was fuller, though still he could not tell in what direction it came. While listening to discover this, his ear caught the hum of voices. He moved on, it became more distinct ; and through it he could even distinguish the very uncelestial sound of knives

and forks clanking on plates. Edmund, notwithstanding, felt something like a responding inward emotion; for he had not yet breakfasted, and it was now two o'clock.

He still moved on, and now the noise of the voices, &c. seemed to arise, actually from below the spot on which he stood. He performed a species of pirouette, looking the very personification of bewilderment. Then stood some seconds motionless. Then, as though smitten by a sudden inspiration, pushed his head and one shoulder through the tangled clusters of an interposing honeysuckle; and, holding firmly with the contrary arm, around the slender and yielding trunk of a young mountain ash, about which the flowery screen had entwined itself, he leaned forward, and beheld, on a broad part of the shelf or terrace of rock next below the one on which he him-

self stood, a long luncheon table, with a large company seated at it. Crowns of hats, cauls of bonnets, and figures, foreshortened to excess, afforded no very sure criterion by which to ascertain whether or not any of the party were known to him. The voices too, were so blended with each other, and with the music, and with the aforesaid clanking, that they brought no certainty of any thing; yet, as he looked and listened, he could not divest himself of the idea, that all was familiar to his eye, and to his ear. While impelled by increasing curiosity, he strained forward in rather an imprudent manner, one of the blossoms which he had collected in the conservatory, and placed loosely within the breast of his coat, now, assisted by his bending attitude, found its way out, and descending lightly as a thistle-down, rested on the bosom of a lady, who immediately lifted up her face

to see whence it came. What was Edmund's astonishment, when he saw the features of Julia ; and what was hers, when she, so unexpectedly, beheld Edmund in his most strange and perilous situation, hanging over her very head. She pronounced his name, and continued looking up, with as much terror as surprise, till the whole company following the direction of her eyes, with one accord, gazed upwards.

A general roar of laughter proceeded from the men ; and several pretty little screams from the ladies.

"Leap it, Edmund !" cried Henry. "Oh, don't ! don't !" involuntarily exclaimed Julia. "I wonder if he could !" said Frances, looking half amused, and half alarmed.

"How funny it would be !" cried the Misses Morven.

“Take the path to the right, Montgomery, and come down to us,” said Lord Arandale. Edmund disappeared from above, and, in a few minutes, joined the party below. He made his way immediately to Julia and Frances, who each extended a hand to him at the same time, making room for him between them. “This is unexpected happiness, indeed !” he said, as he sprang into the offered seat. He looked delighted, he even laughed, though hysterically, as he trembled from head to foot, with uncontrollable emotion.

“You know where you are, I suppose, Montgomery ?” said the Earl. “Not I,” answered Edmund, “further than that my present situation is a very enviable one !” This he said with an air of light gallantry, which concealed tolerably well both the reality and the extravagance of his feelings.

“ You do not know then that this place is the Craigs ?” rejoined the Earl. “ We are all here to day, for the express purpose of displaying its beauties to Julia and Frances, who have never had an opportunity of visiting it before. We are to attempt the top of the rock, as soon as we have fortified ourselves by luncheon.”

“ I have seen many of its beauties,” he replied, “ but without knowing where I was. My horse, in fact, brought me here this morning, while I was thinking of something else.” Then, too much confounded to talk any thing but nonsense, and too much exhilarated to be silent, he addressed Julia, enquiring if she were aware that the building on the top of the rock was a conservatory. She replied in the negative.

“ Allow me then,” he rejoined, with seeming

playfulness, but breathless from agitation, allow me to be the first to present you with an offering of its sweets !” As he spoke, he took the remainder of the flowers from his bosom, and gave them to Julia ; experiencing, at the moment, an indescribable delight in reversing, as it were, the feeling with which he had placed them there. This was mere trifling ; but such was the effect on Edmund’s spirits of all this happiness restored, and without any fault of his too, just at the very moment when he had resigned it all, that, under the intoxicating sense of the present pleasure, he scarcely knew what he said or did ; or how sufficiently to enjoy so much felicity while it lasted ; for through it all there was a vaguely recognised idea, that it must pass away. Julia took the flowers with a smile, not at all calculated to sober Edmund’s transports, and

placed them (of course without thinking what she was doing,) in so enviable a situation, that they were followed by the eyes of our hero, and gazed upon, as their delicate blossoms visibly vibrated to each pulsation of Julia's heart, till he wished himself, not "a glove upon that hand," but a fair blossom, &c.

"We are very much obliged to your horse, Captain Montgomery," said Lady Arandale, "as it is to him, it seems, we owe the pleasure of your company; and now we shall certainly not allow you to escape again till after our ball." Edmund bowed assent. Several of the party asked him if, in his wanderings, he had discovered the bower of the concealed musicians. He described how much they had puzzled his researches. Julia told him (and her voice, which so lately he had scarcely hoped to hear again, thrilled through his heart

as she spoke the unimportant words) that this had all been contrived by Lord Arandale, as an agreeable surprise ; that his lordship had privately sent on musicians, directions to the housekeeper, &c. ; and then, when they were all on the way between * * * * and Arandale, he had, very innocently, proposed that they should look at the Craigs, as it lay but a couple of miles from the direct road.

“ I dare say,” said Frances, “ that Edmund was in the secret, and that he just came on before to be a part of the surprise.”

Julia looked at him to see if this were true, but the question her eyes had intended to ask was forgotten, something in the expression of his producing a sad confusion of ideas just at the moment.

“ I am sure he surprised me in a most especial manner,” drawled out Lady Morven.

“ And quite astounded me,” said Graham, in exactly the same tone. “ Forgetting, I was not the fortunate tenant of a repose chair, I had a narrow escape of falling through this jasmine, and going over the immeasurable cliff!”

“ Fye, don’t talk so, you creature,” said Lady Morven.

“ I was more surprised than any one else, I am sure,” said Miss Morven ; “ if I had not caught hold of this rose bush, and pricked all my fingers, I should certainly have gone over!”

“ And I, if it had not been for this sweet-briar, that has scratched all the back of my neck!”

“ And I, only for this honeysuckle, though one branch broke off, and frightened me so !”

“ And I, I’m sure, if Mr. Gordon had not just put out his arm and saved me !” Thus had all the Misses Morven escaped. “ The

ladies mean, that Captain Montgomery is the most agreeable part of the surprise," said the Earl, good humouredly. The Misses Morven tittered assent. Frances questioned him as to how his joining them had really happened.

He gave as circumstantial an account of his morning adventure as the flutter of his spirits would permit. When he described the situation of his late *couche*, and how he had started to his feet, without remembering where he was, Lady Arandale seriously reprimanded him for his thoughtlessness. All the Misses Morven were clamorous ; Lady Morven said he might really have fallen on the centre of the luncheon table, and frightened them all to death ! Frances scolded him with tears in her eyes. Julia alone did not speak, but she looked round, became pale, and the next moment red. The blood rushed from and to the heart of Edmund

with a corresponding ebb and flow. After a pause, as though to change the too engrossing subject, thus implied by the silence of both, he asked her abruptly, if she had sung since she had been at the Craigs? One song had been attempted, at Lady Arandale's particular request, to try the effect of an echo.

Luncheon ended, the whole party proceeded towards the handsome castellated mansion already mentioned, to view the fine collection of pictures it contained.

CHAPTER XXI.

“ I look’d around, and all was gone.”

WE left our party crossing the now well rolled lawn towards the house.

On their arrival at the great door, which was open, a strange scene presented itself in the entrance-hall, in the centre of which stood a short fat gentleman looking with much astonishment at a little thin old woman, who, from her long, tapering, stomachered waist occupying one half of her height, her full petticoats spreading like a hoop ; her short sleeves and mittens ; her hair,

white as though it were powdered, drawn up over a high sugar-loaf shaped cushion, and her small cap on the top of all—resembled much one of the figures in the frontispiece of an old play book. Her diminutive features had nothing remarkable about them, but the little reddish knob or button at the end of her nose, which seemed placed there expressly to support her spectacles. These, in visible hurry and trepidation, she was adjusting with one hand, while, with the other, she was grasping the fat gentleman's arm, and, at the same time, exclaiming as with looks of terrified amazement she scanned his appearance, “Ye dinna pretend to tell me, sir, that ye are Maister Lauson!” The fat gentleman affirmed that he certainly was Mr. Lauson. The little woman seemed of opinion that she knew better, and maintained that he was not.

The advance of the entering party, and the Earl, addressing the fat gentleman by the name of Lauson, seemed to complete the dismay of poor Mrs. M'Kinley, the housekeeper, for such was the name, and such the quality of the little woman. "Lauson! Lauson! Lauson!" she reiterated, clasping her hands, "wha iver heerd o' sick a thing!—Jean!" she cried next, "Jean! Jean! Jean! Some on ye caw Jean!" A hard-working looking woman entered. "Hear ye to that, Jean!" said Mrs. M'Kinley, "hear ye to that! yon Maister Lauson! Heard ye iver the like o' that?"

"Yon short gentleman?" enquired Jean, as soon as her awkward courtesies to our party were over. "Nay, yon's nane o' Maister Lauson. Maister Lauson's a taw weel lookt gentleman, no' the least like yon gentleman."

“ Tall or short I am Mr. Lauson,” said Lauson very sulkily, for the Misses Morven had laughed out, and the Misses Morven were tittering evidently at his expense.

Lord Arandale desired there might be no more noise, assuring Mrs. M’Kinley that the gentleman, whose identity she seemed so unwilling to admit, not only was, beyond a doubt, Mr. Lauson, but that he was at the Craigs that day by his, the Earl’s, particular desire, to give him the meeting for the arrangement of some business respecting serious repairs, which he understood the park walls required.

“ Now, madam,” said Lauson, “ you’ll not dispute my Lord’s word, I hope.”

“ Yeer no going to tell me,” exclaimed Mrs. M’Kinley, looking wilder than ever, “ that yon was the deevil at cam here and cawd himsel Maister Lauson, and brought my ain

keys we him, and my ain lables on them, and took aw the things awa we him !”

“ As to its being the devil,” replied Lauson, “ I shall not dispute that ; but it certainly was not Mr. Lauson.”

“ What can she mean ?” said the Earl.

“ And did ye send naybody then ?” eagerly demanded the poor woman. On being fully assured that no person whatever had been sent to the Craigs, or authorized in any way to demand of her any thing of which she had the charge, “ Then,” she cried, first clasping her hands for a moment, then flinging her arms to their utmost extent asunder, “ aw is gane—gane—rifled—robbed—lost—ther’s nay-thing left in aw the hoose !”

An explanation was called for. Mrs. M’Kinley flung herself on her knees in the midst of the hall, and, calling on heaven and Jean to

witness the truth of all she should say, after much that was too incoherent to relate, gave the following account, though more frequently interrupted by her hearers than it is necessary to notice.

“It was a fine moonlight night about a month syne, and I was sitting at the window o’ the hooskeeper’s room, (it looks front, ye ken,) and I catched a glympse o’ some-ot like tle a carriage coming roond the hill. I could na credit my ain een, so I looked again, and it turned in among the trees. Weel, said I to Jean, wha can be coming tle this lone place at this time o’ night? It’s a while yet till the young mistress be at age; and I’m no expecting that ony o’ the femely will com’ doon afoor then, if they com’ then it sel. Ye mind that, Jean?” “Weel enough,” said Jean. “The carriage,” continued Mrs. M’Kinley,

“ for it was a carriage sure enough, com’ oot o’ the wood again, and swept along the lawn, and up it com’ to the door, and ain o’ the sarving men, (for there were twa,) jumped doon and made sick a thundering rap as gar’d the hale hoose resound ; the t’other man jumped doon, and opened the carriage door——”

“ But what has all this to do, my good woman,” interrupted the Earl, “ with the house being, as you say, rifled and robbed? The robbers did not drive up to the hall door in their carriage, I suppose!” “ Aye, bit they did, tho’ !” cried Mrs. M’Kinley, wildly. “ Bit hear me oot,” she continued, “ hear me oot, I say! and then dee what ye will wee me! Weel, I hasted roond, and was standing i’ the haw, by the time the hoose door was opened. A taw, weel-looking, vara weel-dressed, elderly gentleman gits oot o’ the carriage, and coms

intle the haw in a great bustle, cawing oot wid a lood voice, ‘ I hope you have got fires there !’ Then he hurries up tle ain o’ the parlour doors, and, finding it locked, he turns roond angrily, saying, ‘ How is this ! Where is Mrs. M’Kinley ?’ What was I to think o’ sick impudence, if he was no Mr. Lauson himsel ?” Here the young men had another laugh at Lauson. “ I stood forward,” continued Mrs. M’Kinley, “ and courtesied tle him. ‘ What is the reason you have not things in some order, madam ?’ said he. I was no expeckin ony body, sir, said I. ‘ Did you not receive my letter from Keswick, ordering you to have things in readiness ?’ No sir, I answered, I had no accounts since my last remittance from Mr. Lauson. ‘ Very odd,’ said he, ‘ however, here ! open these doors ! and get fires immediately in one of the rooms—whichever is

most comfortable. And, d'i hear, send in coffee—I hope you have got something in the house for supper?' There is a little cold meat, sir, said I. 'That won't do,' sais he, 'you must get something hot.' You can have a fowl, sir, said I. You mind picking the fowl, Jean? 'Aye, to be sure,' said Jean. And so he'd have the fowl," continued Mrs. M'Kinley, "'And take care,' he sais, 'you have a well-aired bed, and have a good fire made in my room immediately—and, here! come back!' for I was going, 'when I have had coffee, do you attend me here for further orders!' For, before this," continued Mrs. M'Kinley, "I had opened one of the parlours for him, and followed him in. 'You know, I suppose, that I am Mr. Lauson?' he said. No, sir, said I, I did not know it before, sir. 'Well you know it now, ma'am,' he said." The young men

laughed. “ And wha could misgee the words o’ a gentleman wha took se nickle upon him ! ” said Mrs. M’Kinley, with an appealing, but still wild look at the fairer part of her audience, “ and sae I did as I was bidden, and when his sarving men had brought oot the coffee things, I went in for my orders. He was standing wide on the hearth-stane, we his back tle the fire, and his twa hands in the pockets o’ his breeks, haudding aside his parted coat, for a’ the warld like lord and maister e the hoose.”

“ He then talt me,” continued Mrs. M’Kinley, “ that he had com doon tle see safely removed the plate, coins, books, pictures, &c.&c.”

“ The devil he did ! ” cried Lauson.

“ But of course, you did not let him touch any thing ? ” said the Earl.

“ Hear me oot ! Hear me oot ! ” exclaimed Mrs. M’Kinley, deriving courage from despair.

“ They were to be aw removed, he said, tle

the hoose in toon, that was preparing and furnishing, again Lady Julia should be at age—”

“What an audacious villain !” exclaimed the Earl. “But you did not, I say, allow him to remove any thing ?”

“Every thing ! Every thing ! cried Mrs. M’Kinley, with vehemence : “didna I tell yee, awe was gane thegether ? And I helped to pack them mysel’ !”

“Why, woman, you must have been mad !” said his lordship. “Mad or not mad,” she replied, “I’ve geen him every thing ! Sae hear me oot, and then, as I said afoor, di what ye will we me ! I desarve hanging, and I can git ne mar !”

“Well, well ! say on, say on,” said the Earl.

“If I geid up the things in good order,” she continued, “he wad gee me, he said, receipts for every thing ; mentioning that they were so, that I might no be accountable for ony

damage the things might sustain i' the carriage. And he said further, that to avoid the chafing o' land carriage, aw was tle gang by long sea, in a vessel whilk was now aff the coast. Bit what maist of aw convinced me, at he could be neboddy else bit Maister Lauson, was, at he took oot on his port mantle, aw the keys o' the hoose."—"The keys?" interrupted the Earl. "False ones, of course," said Lauson.

"Na sick a thing," she rejoined, "bit the vara keys themsel and labeled, as I mysel had labeled them, when I geed them tle yeer lordship and Maistriss Montgomery: sae, what was I te think? Nor did the steward, nor the gairdinir, nor the gamkeeper, at slepted i' the hoose for security, iver think o' misdooting at the gintleman was Maister Lauson."

"A pretty business indeed," ejaculated Lauson. "A very serious one, I begin to fear!"

said the Earl. "A very unlikely one," said Lauson, rattling something in his pocket as he spoke. "But come, madam, finish what you have got to say, and then I shall beg leave to put in a word. It's only necessary to give some people rope enough, and they will hang themselves—that I see!"

"He geed me the keys o' the buke-cases," continued Mrs. M'Kinley, "and bad me tle hay the books aw dusted, and that there wad be people here i' the morn's morn, at wad undertake the packing o' the pictures. And sae he desired particular at they should be carefully tane down, and weel wiped ready soon i' the morn."

Many were here the ejaculations of astonishment at such audacity.

"And sae," continued poor Mrs. M'Kinley, "I was up we the dawn; and aw the next day was spent we packing, and I helped every thing we my ain hands; and signs by, I hev hed sick

a pain i' my back iver sine, at I'm no fit tle stand straight !”

No one scarcely could avoid laughing at poor Mrs. M'Kinley's thus claiming merit to herself for the active assistance she had given the plunderer.

“ It's no a laughing matter,” said she bitterly. “ Bit hear me oot, and I care na what coms o' me after ! Weel, towerds the glooming then, sure enough, a boat cam fray the ship at we had seen nigh to the shore aw day ; and it pot in amang the rocks, just below the woody cliff yonder. And up the sailor-men com, bowling through aw the shrubbery walks, and doon they carried aw the kists and boxes.”

The Earl and Lauson looked at each other : there was no ejaculation strong enough for this climax.

“ And when they were tacking oot the

last o' them," continued Mrs. M'Kinley, "I followed mysel through the trees, as far as the view seat, and sat mysel doon; and by cam Maister Lauson."

"I'll prosecute you if you use my name," said Lauson.

"As he cawd himsel at least," she added.

"So, Mrs. M'Kinley," he said, "I am going with the ship mysel, to see all safe," and he passed on. "Weel, I looked after him, and after the kists, and doon on the water, for the moon was up, and all was clear as day; and the ship was lying, and I seed the boat put frae the land and gey toward it; and I seed the kists quite plain, lifted oot on the boat, and drawd up the side o' the ship, ain by ain, till I coonted the last on them; and then they drawd up the boat also. A weel, a weel, thought I, and noo it's aw ower, it's been a queer sudden business, amais-

like tle a dream. And I gade back ti the hoose; and found Jean sweeping up the strey; and sae I helped her to shut the doors and the windows; and we sat doon by the fire, and thought the hoose mayne lanely like, (the men folk was no com in tle their suppers) than we had thought it, aw the years at we had had the care on't."

"You should certainly have shut your doors and windows a little sooner, my good woman!" said the Earl.

"Here's locking the stable when the steed is stolen, with the vengeance," said Lauson.

"Hear ye te that, noo!" cried Mrs. M'Kinley, "hoo he threeps me doon; just as if I was na wratched enu awready. It's easy prophesying when the prophesy is oot! I may be feul, and mad, and aw the rest on't; bit I'm no sick a feul at I need to be talt noo, at the things wad aw be better i'their places, nor i'

the hands o'a thief and a robber ! Bit hoo was I to ken at he was a thief? Did'na he caw himself Maister Lauson, and I kent at his lordship did'na think ye a thief, or he wad'na ha' geen ye his business."

"Don't be noisy, my good woman," said the Earl, but mildly; for he made charitable allowance for the excited state of her feelings. "And pray when did all this happen?" he continued. "Aboot a month syne," she replied. "Bit the receipts will show." "What receipts?" asked Lauson.

"Did'na I tell ye, at he geed me receipts for ivery thing?" she replied, with much asperity; at the same time beginning to rummage her pockets. "To be sure I hey them!" she murmured; and the longer she was in finding them among the varied treasures she successively drew forth, and in her agitation alternately

took from one pocket, and put into the other, the more frequently she repeated, “to be sure I hey them !”

At length, with trembling hands, after frequent wiping of her spectacles, which her fast falling tears as often dimmed, she selected from the chaos a tied up parcel, containing receipts for every thing, all signed with the name of Lauson, and in a hand which was a very tolerable imitation of his.

Lauson exclaimed against the daring act of forging his name ; swearing that whoever had done so, should swing for it ! “ And as for your long story, madam,” he continued, turning to Mrs. M’Kinley, “ I shall quickly prove it all a pack of lies ! Here are the keys, labels and all, in my own coat-pocket,” and thence he accordingly produced them. “ Now, its a likely story,” he continued, “ if a highwayman-rascal had been able to get possession of them

out of Mrs. Montgomery's japan cabinet, at Lodore House, that he would have run the risk of putting them there again, after they had served his turn ; and from thence I took them with my own hands, only three days since."

Exclamations of wonder here followed. The Earl cast a very angry glance at poor Mrs. M'Kinley. She was thunderstruck: she could not deny that those were indeed the keys, yet protested that her former statement was notwithstanding gospel truth!

Affected by her tears and protestations, Julia declared her belief of poor Mrs. M'Kinley's innocence, however inexplicable the circumstances might be.—“ Well,” said the Earl, at length, “ as you, who are most interested, wish it, we shall at least consider her innocent till she is proved guilty.”

Mrs. M'Kinley wept like a child, fell at

Julia's feet, and begged she would miss-caw and abuse her, aw at iver she could, and no break her heart by sick goodness. When the surprise had at length a little subsided, many spacious apartments were visited; and the picture gallery in particular; which, bearing on its now naked walls the numerous traces of departed frames of various shapes and sizes, gave thus a silent and melancholy testimony of how great a loss had been sustained. Edmund reminded Lord Arandale, that a clue might be found to some useful discoveries, in what Gotterimo had said of the London swindler having sold to a friend of his, plate, pictures, coins, &c.

His lordship requested the gentlemen to be present while he examined the rest of the servants. The ladies walked on towards the view-seat.

CHAPTER XXII.

“ Oh! who can speak what all can feel!”

JULIA and Frances, during the straying and waiting which ensued, happened to wander into a path which separated them from the rest of the young people.

“ Do you know, Julia,” said Frances, “ that I have become of late a great judge of love?”

“ And pray how has that happened?” asked Julia, trying to laugh.

“ Why, it is in consequence of all those new lovers that you and I have had of late. I now understand the business perfectly. I know

their ways of looking, and their ways of sighing, and their ways of lowering the voice.—There is no describing it, you know ; but, in short, I now understand it perfectly.”

“ You will, at this rate, become quite a dangerous member of society,” rejoined Julia, with another effort to laugh.

“ What a novice I must have been but a few days since,” continued Frances, “ to have been so taken in as I was by that business between Edmund and Lady Susan. Why, he no more loves her (nor ever did,) than I do that stick, Sir Philip !—That she loves him, indeed, I have no doubt.”

Julia’s heart beat so fast, that she made several attempts before she could articulate the following words : “ Then why did he wish her ladyship to marry him ?”

“ That is what puzzles me,” replied Frances,

“ I think there must have been something strange in the business ; Lady Susan did say a good deal about his being so modest in consequence of his want of rank, that she feared she had been obliged to meet him more than half way.”

“ But why meet her any part of the way, if he did not wish it ?” said Julia.

“ He might, you know, have been dazzled by the great advantages of such a marriage,” replied Frances. “ Or been induced by her ladyship’s evident preference to mistake his own feelings. But, however that may have been, of two things I am now certain : the one, that he does not love Lady Susan ; the other, that he does love you.” She paused, but Julia made no reply. “ Yes, Julia,” Frances continued, “ I am convinced that he loves you in the most extravagant, the most passionate, the

most enthusiastic manner ! Oh, it is so plain to be seen in every thing !”

Julia was still silent ; but she pressed her sister’s hand, involuntarily, as if thanking her for the joyful emotions her words were exciting. “ In short,” continued Frances, “ he loves you with my love and the Marquis’s put together, if you can imagine what sort of a love that would make. And I am sure he is breaking his heart because he knows papa will never consent to your marrying him. I wish,” she added, “ he did love Lady Susan—don’t you, Julia ?” Julia made no immediate reply. “ I say, Julia,” repeated Frances, “ don’t you wish it was Lady Susan that Edmund loved ?”

“ Why no—don’t you think it would be very unamiable of him to love a stranger better than those he has always loved, ever since they were children ?”

“Unamiable?—Oh, I don’t know,” said Frances; “but I am sure that loving you will make him very unhappy!”

“Why?”

“Oh, you know, because papa will never allow you to marry him.”

“But—but can’t—can’t we always have a great regard for each other without—without marrying?” asked Julia.

“Oh, a regard, yes,” said Frances, “but I think that poor Edmund would be much happier, if he loved Lady Susan, and were married to her, than he will be loving you, and going to sea, and you marrying the Marquis, or some such person.”

“That I will never do!” said Julia, with sudden energy.

At this moment Edmund appeared coming towards them. Julia hastily put up her parasol,

though the walk was perfectly shady. The parasol entangled in every branch, and she as hastily took it down again.

Edmund now joined them, and offered an arm to each. Coonel Morven, however, whom they soon encountered, interrupted this arrangement, declaring that the walks were too narrow for three, and requesting Frances to take his arm. Thus they proceeded, with the rest of the party, towards the rock conservatory.

Julia was unusually silent, but there was something in her manner more dangerous, if possible, than ever to Edmund's right resolves. So true is it, that nothing can pass in the minds of those we love, without our knowing, at least, that there is something passing. And of what nature that something was, seemed in the present instance to be recognised, for he, too, became silent, yet, during that silence, both felt

a conviction of each other's affection, stronger perhaps than any they had before known.

How often, how very often, when distance, both of time and place intervened, was the impression received during that, to both, for ever memorable day remembered, and attempted to be renewed, severally, by both; how often inwardly appealed to! How often called upon to contradict proofs, to bear down facts! But the misery of this species of evidence is, that though at the moment the most entirely convincing, it fades in absence to a mere dream of the imagination; and while, with strange inconsistency, we find the greatest aggravation of our suffering, in the fear that we never did possess that of which we are thus lamenting the loss, we still do lament, and with the bitter feelings of those entitled to complain, that they have been bereft of all!

A pretty general meeting of stray couples now took place in the conservatory, and many were the observations made on our hero's perilous *couche*. After viewing various other beauties of the place, our party, at length, agreed that it was time to proceed to Arandale, which they reached without further adventure.

Their arrival was soon followed by that of the Marquis of H——, and such other guests as were not of the immediate family circle.

CHAPTER XXIII.

. “ In vain the sun hath set :
 Light, his glorious attribute, remains,
 And, in sportive triumph, takes ten thousand
 Shapes.”

“ The enchanter’s thunders roll afar, subside—
 Now roll again, and murmur o’er the wave.”

THE gala of the evening was to commence as soon as dusk, with illuminations, fireworks, and various entertainments out of doors, and to conclude with a masked ball, and unmasked supper within the Castle.

The woods, as far as the eye could reach on either side of the grand approach, and also in the vicinity of the walks leading to the lake

and to Lady Susan's cottage were festooned with coloured lamps, and, at an early hour, filled with groups of company. Lady Susan's cottage itself was illuminated in a simple style; while, to the great delight of the peasantry and tenantry, who were permitted to peep in at the window, her ladyship, dressed in a rustic garb of stuff, with ribbon tucks, sat by a bright fire spinning with great industry. The trees were purposely left without lamps to a certain distance round, and at the back of the little thatched building, which, with its one window lit up as if to contribute its humble mite to the great public rejoicings, and its open door emitting a stream of fire-light, had a singularly picturesque appearance.

Julia, supported by Edmund on one side and the Marquis of H—— on the other; and

Frances by Colonel Morven and Sir Philip Barton Jones, moved, with a crowd of others, towards the lake, where wonders awaited the curious spectator. The trees which surrounded, and even dipped their branches into this fine sheet of water, were thickly and beautifully hung with coloured lamps, which, reflected in seemingly unfathomable depths, shone like the stars of an inverted sky. The long, light iron bridge which crossed a narrow arm of the lake was also illuminated with much taste and variety. On this our party, with a number of the select company, took up their position : the situation being elevated, and commanding, therefore, a good view of all that was to be seen.

The Earl had contrived a more animated representation of the engagement, of which this fête was to celebrate the anniversary, than

could have been produced by the hackneyed mode of transparencies.

He had had a number of pleasure boats fitted up and rigged exactly as men of war, with their sides artificially raised, to admit of their seeming to have one, two, or three tier of guns, according to their ratings. Of these, two hostile fleets now appeared on the lake, manœuvring not far from each other. The admirals, on both sides, exhibiting their three stern lights, signaling their respective squadrons ; and, from time to time, turning their broadsides in full view, lowering their mimic ports, which were lighted up within, and making thus an ostentatious display of their triple row of guns. Edmund absolutely laughed like a child at the pompous airs they assumed so well.

“Capital ! capital !” he exclaimed. Arthur, who stood near him, was delighted. Many

were the questions put by the ladies to Captain Montgomery. He explained every movement as well as he could for laughing : but to him, who was accustomed to wield the fearful engines of real destructive warfare thus imitated, the proud airs of those little vessels were irresistibly amusing. While to Julia, and all such as had never seen any thing greater, the representation was growing quite imposing. Indeed, the longer it was gazed upon, the better became the deception ; for the imagination and the eye both began to allow distance for the deficiency in size, and, as the engagement seemed about to commence, the whole moving scene assumed much of reality and consequence.

Henry, too, as a naval character, had become the oracle of another circle of ladies at a little distance ; for, on the present occasion, he did

not feel much inclined to place himself in immediate comparison with our hero.

Now a few signal-guns were fired : this was followed by a pause, almost awful : when a brisk cannonade commenced along the line of battle, on both sides. One English frigate, in particular, made herself very conspicuous. But Edmund's power of giving information seemed suddenly quite exhausted ; or he was so much engaged pointing out Admiral Lord Fitz-Ullin's vessel, and explaining his signals, and what had been from the first his intentions, that he was quite deaf to all questions respecting the frigate in question. What would have become of the unsatisfied and increasing curiosity of the ladies, it would have been difficult to say, had not an elderly gentleman in naval uniform informed them, that the remarkably situated vessel which had drawn so

much of their attention, and which might well be termed the heroine of the day, was the Euphrasia, commanded by Captain Montgomery. He then proceeded to eulogize the gallantry, general character, and even the private virtues of the said captain.

“ You, sir,” he added, addressing Edmund, “ who seem so well acquainted with Lord Fitz-Ullin and his plans ; you must have met with Captain Montgomery, I should think ? There is not a man in the service whom Fitz-Ullin values more, or rather perhaps, I should say, so much.” Edmund, no longer able to feign attention to other subjects, bowed, and smiled, at the same time casting an appealing look around him, as much as to say, “ Will no one release me from out of this dilemma ? ” The stranger stared. The Marquis good naturedly interposed, and said, “ I believe, sir, you have

been all this time putting Captain Montgomery very much to the blush."

"Have I then the honour of addressing Captain Montgomery?" said our naval friend, first bowing, then adding, "allow me, sir," he shook Edmund most cordially by the hand.

Julia's enthusiastic heart glowed while it palpitated. How insignificant now appeared inherited titles, when compared with the exalted name Edmund had obtained for himself! How dimly now shone, mere, reflected hereditary splendour, unsustained by great actions on the part of the individual himself, when compared with the inherent, self-existent glory of the founder of nobility! She could not love Edmund better; but henceforward, instead of being afraid and ashamed of her feelings, she would be proud of her preference for such a character! She was sure she should now have cou-

rage to own it to her father. Then, a sudden thought of the dangers attendant on so brilliant a career ; dangers which, at the moment, seemed passing in review before her eyes ; dangers which might, on any day or hour again recur, struck a panic to her heart, and occasioned an involuntary movement, which, had she not checked it instantly, would have been a gentle pressure of the arm on which she leaned.—Edmund started—suspended his breathing for some moments—and then relinquished, with a blush at his own folly, a presumptuous surmise which had crossed his mind. But he drew the arm that leaned on his closer to his side though so gradually, that there seemed no impertinence, scarcely intention in the act ; or, rather, it might be supposed to have been induced by the necessity of taking some such precaution against the perpetually passing and re-passing crowd.

The fire of the mimic fleets was now slackening ; the smoke clearing away, and the French vessels lowering their colours, amid the shouts of the delighted multitude. Some of the disabled ships of the enemy were now seen to drift to a certain distance from the rest of the fleet, where, instead of burning or blowing up, in the common mode, they immediately became the sources whence issued fireworks, curious, various, and brilliant in the extreme. During this beautiful exhibition, “Rule, Britannia!” was played in magnificent style on board the English fleet : the Earl having placed, for that purpose, one of his favourite musicians in each mimic vessel, so that the little fleet might thus form a complete band. When the harmonies on the water died away, they were answered by “God save the King !” from another band of equally excellent per-

formers, who were concealed among the woods, at the distance best calculated for effect. At these sounds, such of the company as were of a rank to be indoor guests, returned to the Castle ; while the remaining crowd were entertained in lit up tents, in which confidential servants presided : some personating prize agents, and distributing, not only refreshments to the people, but the Earl's bounty, under the name of prize money. This latter immunity, however, was extended only to such as had wit enough to humour the sports of the evening, by assuming the characters of sailors, or sailors' wives ; for it was Lord Arandale's object to add as much as was in his power to the well merited popularity of a service, so vitally essential to the glory, and very being of the nation.

CHAPTER XXIV.

. "Some sport
 Amid the waves, like monsters of the deep,
 And some, among the foliage of the groves."

ALL now assumed their fancy dresses. Julia, Frances, and the four Misses Morven, were, by Lord Arandale's wish, habited as sea-nymphs.

The principal covering consisted of a long clinging robe of a bright green. Around the bust was wrapped white gauze, of the slightest texture ; its folds so arranged, as to resemble, as much as possible, the crested foam of ocean ; from which, the head, neck, and arms, seemed, as it were, emerging ; while a part of

the same drapery fell over one shoulder, and floated loosely behind the figure, like the line of light on divided waters. Through various parts of the dress was twisted bright scarlet coral, intermingled with tufts of sea-weeds, bound together by clusters of the most brilliant emeralds, seemingly unset, and mixed with small shells, to give their grouping a natural appearance ; while over all were scattered costly pearls, innumerable, neither strung nor set. The feet and ankles, in particular, were entirely encrusted with ornaments of this mixed description, as if the accumulation had been collected, by treading the rocks and caverns of the fathomless deep, among Neptune's hidden treasures.

The very long fair hair of the sisters, worn quite loose, was peculiarly becoming to this costume. It hung around in a shower of

brightness, as though sunbeams were gilding the light spray with which, sportive movements through the watery element, thus partially covered, as with a sparkling yet transparent veil, each lovely vision. This group did not wear masks ; as they were to assist in receiving the company.

A small ante-room, the first of the suite thrown open on the present occasion, was fitted up to represent a cave. Before its entrance lay irregular masses of rock, on which were seated some of the Misses Morven, in their sea-nymph attire, combing their dishevelled locks with branches of coral, and singing the while, like the Syrens of old ; till, on the approach of guests, they would dart off with looks of well feigned wildness, into the mouth of the cave ; serving thus by their mockery of flight, as guides to the company. The interior

of the cave was decorated with coral, growing out of the crevices of the rock, and budding with precious stones ; slender sea-plants gracefully pendant from each projecting point ; every variety of magnificent shell, from some of which seemed to proceed strains of the wildest music, like the notes of Eolian harps ; whilst others sent forth sounds, resembling the rushing of mighty waters. Under foot shone golden sands, promiscuously strewn with pearls and variegated pebbles ; while fragments of spar and many-sided crystal, containing concealed lamps, being the only visible sources of light, gave to the whole a magical effect. Here, in picturesque attitudes, reclining on couches of feathery and rainbow tinted seaweed, appeared the principal figures of the group. They too were singing, but in sweeter strains than those without, and in harmony

with the thrilling breathings, still proceeding from the shells.

On the entrance of the guests, led in by the flying Misses Morven, the recumbent nymphs, gracefully moving their arms in time to the soft music, by looks and gestures indicated the way through each recess of the cave to an outlet at its further extremity, which led into the next reception room.

The advancing company now found themselves in a seeming grove of fine old oaks, the stems of which were entwined, and the branches festooned with laurel. Triumphal wreaths of the latter material were also borne aloft in the joyous dance by a group of wood-nymphs, wearing on their heads, crowns, and over their shoulders, garlands of roses, with which were intermingled leaves, both from the forest tree and its triumphal wreathings ; sig-

nifying, that if we would have the gentler blossoms of our gardens flourish, the oak and the laurel must be cultivated.

All who entered the grove in naval uniform, were conducted by two of the nymphs to an open space among the trees ; where Lady Susan, in the character of Britannia, was seated on a beautiful throne, curiously carved in marble to represent the white cliffs of Albion; canopied by oaks, and sheltered, on either side, by a luxuriant growth of laurel ; the steps of the throne, subject waves spell bound to the stillness of stone, by the presence of their awful mistress ; while on one of them stood Triton, with his conch at his lips, in the attitude of awaiting command. The rich harmonies of "Rule, Britannia!" meantime filled the air every where ; as though the old oaks themselves had been the performers ; for, while the deeper tones

seemed to come mellowed from within the imprisonment of their knotted trunks, the softer ones were heard whispering at large among the waving of their lofty tops.

Each claimant being led to the feet of Britannia, she took a laurel wreath from the hands of her attendant nymphs, and, with a gracious smile, (a triumphal flourish from the conch of Triton at the same moment proclaiming the act,) placed it on the brows of the hero.

In the great room appeared a motley crowd in the costumes of all the nations under heaven ; so that, on first entering, a traveller's eye would have been reminded of the great mart at Gibraltar.

Lord Arandale had requested that all officers should wear uniform ; Edmund could not, therefore, without incurring the charge of affectation, avoid compliance.

Habited, accordingly, in his full dress, or roast beef coat, and (for things could not be done by halves) decorated with every star and garter he had ever won, he made his appearance in the marine cave. But, having fatally neglected the precaution taken by the wise Ulysses against the voices of Syrens, he found it quite impossible to proceed further; and, indeed, seemed to be so much at home among the sea-nymphs, that landsmen, as they passed, were induced to make many witty comments, vowing they would never again compassionate sailors, on the score of their privations.

They had heard, indeed, of mermaids, and read of Syrens; but, as the former were proverbial for a very uninteresting peculiarity of form, and the latter were called, by Johnson, sea-monsters, they had no idea that the rocks

and caves of old ocean were inhabited by such water angels as those they now beheld.

Lady Morven appeared as a Sultana, dressed in all that could be devised of magnificence. Having some taste, her ladyship made many deviations from the hackneyed costume—wearing one, the groundwork of which, instead of being of the strong and unbecoming colours generally adopted, was of white satin; though that pure fabric was nearly covered with rich highly raised embroidery of the most brilliant hues, mixed with gold. Both tunic and petticoat were deeply bordered and fringed with gold, and the latter adorned with peculiar richness up the front, where the opening of the former displayed it to great advantage. The trowser and open hanging sleeve were of course not forgotten, while the numberless claspings, fastenings, and loopings, bracelets and armlets, with the superb zone and stomacher, necklace and crescent, all of jewels, chiefly brilliants,

brought together such a concentration of dazzling rays, that, when over all was flung a veil of a material so transparent that nothing of it could be seen but the beautiful miniature flowers, embroidered in gold and bright colours, with which it was sprinkled ; those flowers, as the moving of the invisible drapery caused them to float around, seemed so many painted and glittering butterflies, following and fluttering in the blaze of light emitted by so much splendour. The bird of paradise too, worn in front of the turban, and sustained by the crescent of jewels, was thus so severed by their lustre from all that seemed tangible, that he appeared hovering above the bright vision, as doubtful where to alight. Her ladyship leaned on the arm of Mr. Graham, who had assumed the dress of a Sultan, on being assured that it would not be required of him to do any thing but loll on an ottoman.

Next appeared a group consisting of an old

blind man, selling matches, and led by a dog—an excellent figure; a little girl, driving a wheelbarrow of apples, and calling them vociferously; and a middle-aged woman, crying the last dying speech of the latest executed murderer. Now a group of Circassian slaves; now a number of naval officers, arm and arm; now many curious groups of wandering musicians, ballad singers, and pedlars of various countries. Herds of foreign peasants; then came Turks, Jews, May-morning dancers; these last, children; their queen, a lovely little creature, leading a lamb by a wreath of roses, while the gaily decorated pole, with its many garlands, showered the fragrance of fresh flowers wherever it passed; then a group of archers of the Royal Edinburgh Society. In short, enumeration would be endless. Next appeared a set of gypsies, one of the figures very good—an old man with grey hair, and bent double, leading an excellent imitation of

a small donkey, animated within by a little boy, and bearing on the centre of the sack, which was thrown across its back, an infant in wax, seemingly just able to sit in a little heap, by help of the old cloak, drawn tight about it; the deception complete. This group took the liberty of making a halt for a short time in the grove, where, under one of the old trees, they pitched a tent, and from a projecting branch of another, at a little distance, suspended a kettle, under which they set fire to some exquisite perfumes, in the form of faggots; while one of the youngest and prettiest of their party sat on the ground, blowing the embers to a flame, without other means than her own rosy lips; till, smoke and all, the gipsy encampment formed a very picturesque object.

Among the gipsies were some amusing fortune-tellers, but these latter were all thrown into shade by the striking figure of an Indian

juggler, who came in soon after, quite alone. He was tall, and dressed in long loose black robes. Instead of passing on, he paused before the party in the cave, waved his wand, and looked fixedly at them. His countenance was covered by a peculiarly hideous black mask, through which his eyes flashed with a supernatural ferocity, assisted by fiery regions of stained crystal around the apertures. He made signs that he was dumb, but that he wished to show Julia her fortune, and immediately passing his wand between her and Edmund, waved to all to make a clear space ; then drawing a circle round Julia, pointed to it and to Edmund, stamped with his foot, and seemed to forbid his passing the magic boundary. Edmund made several laughing attempts to enter the circle, but the juggler as often interposed his wand and stamped again. The juggler next taking Henry by the arm, placed him beside Julia within the circle.

“So, I am to be the happy man, it seems!” said Henry, carelessly taking the hand of his cousin. She appeared not to like the jest, and hastily endeavoured to withdraw her hand, but he held it fast, giving her a glance which made her tremble. The juggler now displayed a ring, which he gave to Henry, who placed it on Julia’s finger so suddenly, that she was not aware what he was about to do, and said, “This is my wife.” At the same moment, the words, “This is my husband,” proceeded, or seemed to proceed from the lips of Julia, in a voice loud and distinct, though unlike that in which she usually spoke. “No ! no ! no !” she cried instantly, in her own voice, flinging off the ring, and darting out of the circle.

“Yes ! yes ! yes !” said a voice from beneath the ground on which they stood. “Yes ! yes ! yes !” repeated voices from within the rocks on every side, successively, and finally from

above their heads, till the last sound seemed lost in distance. The juggler, the while, pointing with his wand, now here, now there, still indicating the spot whence the voice seemed to proceed.

“Was it not you then that said, this is my husband?” enquired two or three of the young ladies, turning to Julia, “Nonsense! nonsense!” she exclaimed pettishly.

“The fellow is a ventriloquist,” said Edmund aside to the inquisitive Misses Morven, who seemed never to have heard one before. At the same time, approaching our heroine, he offered her his arm, for she seemed to need support, and he felt, too, secretly delighted by the visible antipathy to the idea of a union with Henry, even in jest, evinced by the countenance and involuntary movements of Julia. Henry, however, drew her other hand over his arm, without even asking her permission.

“Well, Julia!” he said, laughing, “thank

heaven, we are married at last, and publicly enough this time," he added, pretending to lower his voice. "Remember," he proceeded, again raising it, and again affecting to laugh, "you can never be off, in Scotland, after saying before two witnesses, the awful words—This is my husband!"

"As I never did, however, nor ever shall say so," commenced Julia. Henry interrupted our heroine, by observing carelessly, "that reminds me of the lady in the play, who swears to her father, never to marry her lover, after she is married to him already."

This remark, though made with the greatest levity, shocked Edmund more than he was willing to confess, even to himself; not that, at the time, he believed it to allude to any thing more than the folly which had just passed.

"How very funny! how very funny!" said several of the young ladies. "Those sort of

jokes are very disagreeable, I think," said Julia. "Oh, you don't think it a subject for jesting upon?" observed Henry, not at all disconcerted. "Nor do I, Julia, believe me!" he added, again affecting to lower his voice.

"The part of the juggler is certainly very well sustained," remarked Frances. "Yes, very well indeed," said Julia, bowing to the juggler. "The company seem to be almost collected," she added, "so I think we may now go to the great room, and commence dancing."

Henry, thinking he had now sufficiently plagued Julia, dropped her arm, and offered his services to two of the Misses Morven. Edmund could not resist the opportunity of turning to our heroine, and saying, in a whisper—"for heaven's sake, Julia, what does Henry mean?" "He thinks his absurdity wit, I suppose," she replied, without hesitation. Edmund, at the moment, felt re-assured,

by the ready frankness of her manner, though long after, and when new circumstances had arisen, he remembered that the words of her reply were, certainly, very evasive. One of the Misses Morven begged to have her fortune told. The juggler drew the magic circle around her, and then, with his arms folded, stood motionless. The unclaimed damsel looked round to see who was to be her companion. The juggler waved his wand, as though interdicting the approach of any intruder. The spectators began to laugh ; and the young lady got out of her solitary sphere, declaring that fortune-telling was a very dull amusement.

CHAPTER XXV.

“ He seems to beckon thee to his cave.”

Our group at length entered the great room, where their appearance created a very general sensation, notwithstanding the immense circle already formed round a character, which, previous to their entrance, had been the centre of attraction. They could not penetrate near enough to the inner part of the ring to see what was going on ; but were told by a gentleman, who was politely resigning his own place to put our heroine a step nearer promotion, that the character so surrounded was certainly the best which had yet appeared ; and that, though unmasked, no one could make him out. “ It would have been a thousand pities,” added

General Morven, whom they now encountered, “had he worn a mask; for the countenance is the best half of the jest, he looks so completely in earnest!” “And so truly anxious to commend and sell his goods,” said our first informant, who seemed to be a friend of the General’s, for they shook hands, and General and Admired each other.

“And treats every one,” rejoined the General, “so exactly with the degree of respect which their assumed character claims.”

“The look he gave the woman selling the last dying speech, would immortalize a new Garrick!” said the General. “In short the whole thing is the most complete piece of acting I ever saw! His expression too of disappointment and astonishment is so good, when people, after looking at and pricing things, walk off without buying.”

Julia and Frances, each leaning on an arm of Edmund, had by this time, with the assistance

of the General and his friend, got almost to the front of the circle ; whence, who should they behold standing in the centre, little thinking he was at a masquerade, and striving heart and soul to sell his fine tings, but our old acquaintance Gotterimo. He was making his best bows to Lady Morven, who, in the blaze of jewels we have already described, was seated with her Sultan on a splendid ottoman. Ere, however, we proceed to relate what immediately followed, we must account for our poor little friend being found in such good company.

Having on his return to town, made some discoveries respecting the valuables pawned by the famous swindler, which, from the great interest evinced by Mrs. Montgomery in the mosaics, he thought might be of consequence to a family that had so greatly befriended him, he determined to make his next travelling speculation, attendance on the Ayrshire race meeting, and at its conclusion to proceed to Lord

Arandale's castle, and give his lordship the important information. Various accidents so delayed our little traveller on the cross road, that he did not arrive at Arandale till many hours later than he intended. When he came to the lodge gates, he found them all open, and the grounds, as he proceeded, covered with lights, merry groups, &c. &c. "Dis be von fair," thought Gotterimo; and he debated with himself, whether he should not take the opportunity of doing a little business; but, on second thoughts, he decided that an out of door fair held by torch-light, was no place to expose for sale such valuable articles as those of which his stock consisted. He continued his way, therefore, towards the Castle. This he found also lit up; while beneath its illuminated colonnade, ascending its steps, and entering its open portals, he observed a motley crowd, many of whom, as the seller of matches, were of much lower degree than himself. He

could, therefore, feel no scruples in entering. He saw also, in the first hall, many who appeared prepared to turn a penny as well as himself; for some had packs on their backs, some baskets in their hands with perfumery, pastry, pamphlets, newspapers, &c. He also saw as many, or more persons, whose appearance justified the hope of their making costly purchases. “Dis be de place for me!” thought Gotterimo. The crowd in the hall were moving onward, and he moved with them. “I vill just go fere I see de odder tradge-peoples go,” he thought. He observed each person, as they passed a respectable looking man in black at the foot of the stairs, present a card. This appeared to him a very regular and business-like proceeding. He determined, therefore, to do the like; and taking out one of his own cards, indicating the articles he had for sale, and the street and number of his shop in Bath, he handed it to the butler, who stood

receiving, almost at the same moment, so many tickets, that the nature of Gotterimo's deposit was unnoticed.

He now ascended the great stairs without further obstacle, admiring as he went the magnificent carpets, which were spread beneath his feet on every step ; the rich candelabras, which were held aloft by statues of bronze on every landing ; and the splendid gold-laced liveries of the servants, who, everywhere, pointed the way, (gold in any shape, was never lost on Gotterimo). He passed through the cave, at a time when it was so much crowded, that he was not observed by his friends, the sea-nymphs ; nor did he see them, so entirely was his attention absorbed, examining the pearls that lay scattered beneath his feet, to ascertain if any of them were real. Finding them however to be but imitation, he passed on through the grove to the great room. Here his ears were at once assailed with "Oystairs ! Oys-

tairs!" "Who'll buy my primroses?" "Horrible and unnatural murder!—most cruel murder!" "Ripe strawberries! Ripe strawberries!" "Large apples! Large apples! Large apples!" And now a light wheelbarrow, impelled forward with the speed of a velocipede, by as light a little girl, ran up against him and almost upset itself, by driving over his feet. Flower girls courtesied as they passed, offering for sale bunches of roses. "You be var civil, my pretty dears," said Gotterimo, "but I no give no money for such foolish tings."

A richly dressed group now came in view; and Gotterimo thought he might have done "de great deal of business," if it had not been for the ungenerous interference of a noisy, obtrusive, gentleman's hair-dresser, while he offered for sale rouge, stays accommodated to the shape, lip-salve *à la rose*, Sicilian bloom, whiskers, eyebrows, moustache, and ——'s invaluable solution for rendering red or grey hair a beautiful black, displaying for the benefit

of single gentlemen, a long list of the names of rich widows and great heiresses, &c.

Soon after this, it was, that our party, having as we have described, pressed their way through the surrounding crowd, first discovered, in the object of general curiosity, their little friend Gotterimo. He was, at the moment, as we have stated, making all his best bows to Lady Morven and Mr. Graham, the splendour of whose appearance had filled his bosom with hopes almost as dazzling as the constellation before which he worshipped. Lord Arandale now joining the group, a grand denouement took place. After much ado, the poor little intruder was got to comprehend, in some degree, his situation ; at least to know that all the mob which surrounded him, consisted of ladies and gentlemen ; though, why many of them should choose to appear so little like such, might not, perhaps, come quite within the scope of his comprehension.

Gotterimo's motives for visiting Arandale

having been, in the first few moments, explained to the Earl, his lordship, with his good-natured smile, whispered about among his friends, the true quality of the supposed well sustained character. The buzz went round; and Gotterimo, on his progress through the rooms, to make his exit, was so often intercepted by such as wished either to oblige their noble host, or reward the little man for the amusement he had afforded themselves, that our friend's boxes were quickly cleared of all their contents, and at prices highly satisfactory to the vendor; who, on perceiving that he obtained whatever he demanded, not from the ignorance but from the whim of the purchasers, began to think it no great sin to raise the market a little.

Immediately after the interruption occasioned by Gotterimo's adventures, our sea-nymphs and wood-nymphs, led by Britannia herself, formed for a peculiar dance, the plan

of which had been previously arranged. The figure was to take in the whole of the united group ; and, on a signal given by the music, the young lady's respective partners, in whatever disguise, were to join them as they stood in their places. Young Lord K—— approached Lady Susan. Sir Philip flew to the side of Frances. Henry took his place near one of the Misses Morven. Lord Morven, Colonel Morven, &c. filled up the party, till Julia alone stood unclaimed, and, at the same time, importunately beset for alms by the old blind man who sold matches. He was bent double. A profusion of white hair fell around his patched and ragged shoulders. He held in one hand his hat, crutch, and the string by which his dog was fastened, while his other hand was stretched forth with a beseeching palm, and, in the piteous and tremulous accents of extreme age, he craved her ladyship's compassion. At length, to humour the jest,

she offered him a small donation. This the mendicant bent on one knee to receive, grasping, as he did so, and firmly retaining the hand that presented it in one of his, while, with the other, he flung off his disguises, and sprang to his feet the young and handsome Marquis of H——, unmasked, but dressed for Neptune, with a crown and trident, and splendid armour of gold and silver scales. The plaudits on the occasion were universal.

Edmund, who was thrown out by his absence from the breakfast table when the engagements for this dance were being formed, and who, consequently, was but a spectator, felt his arm touched from behind. He looked over his shoulder, and beheld the juggler, who, turning, made signs to him to follow; he did not, however, feel disposed to take the hint. The dumb fortune-teller pressed nearer, and said, in a low distinct whisper, “I am not what I seem: follow me, if you wish to know who

you are !” These words aroused Edmund. He turned and immediately followed. “ It must be some impertinent jest,” he said to himself, angry at his own credulity, “ yet it is just possible that—that something, that some one connected with my strange history may—may have chosen——.” The dark figure meanwhile glided as rapidly through the dense crowd, as if there had been no obstacle to its free passage. It was with difficulty just kept in view by Edmund.

CHAPTER XXVI.

“ Chief mixes his strokes with chief, and man with man ;
Steel, clanging, sounds on steel !”

THE mysterious stranger, our hero still following, descended the great stairs, crossed the inner and entrance-halls, and went out at the great door ; then, hurrying past the flaring flambeaux of the servants in attendance on waiting carriages, made for a thick grove at a considerable distance. Arrived at the grove the figure proceeded some way among the thickest of the trees. Edmund followed, for a time, in silence ; at length he demanded, rather angrily, whither the fellow meant to lead him. The stranger made no reply, but continued his rapid pace towards the most

remote, and, by there appearing no lights in that direction, evidently the most unfrequented part of the grounds. "I will follow no further," said Edmund, standing still, after a quick pursuit of some minutes. "If there is, indeed, any important communication which it is necessary should be made to me in private, we have been long since far enough removed from all possibility of being overheard." The juggler stopped, and faced about. "Young man," he said, "you may well believe that my business here this evening was not to play the idle mummerly you have witnessed. Follow me, therefore!"

"If your business regards me, name it now, and here!" said Edmund. The stranger fixed his eyes on those of our hero, while, beneath his cloak, he grasped something which Edmund almost held out his hand to receive, so sure did he feel for the moment that it must be a packet of papers containing the informa-

tion he so much desired to obtain. The stranger's hand appeared to hesitate. The fellow spoke again, perhaps to gain time. "The daughter of Lord L——," he said slowly, his eyes still fixed on Edmund, "must never be the wife of ——," he paused, drew a step nearer, then recommenced, "hereafter you shall know, of whom ; at this crisis there might be danger in the discovery."

"I will know all this moment!" exclaimed Edmund, "else why have I been led here? I will not be trifled with, sir! If your words have any meaning, explain them! If they have none, and that you have dared to make my most sacred feelings the subject of an impertinent and indelicate jest, be assured that, whoever you may be, you shall answer to me for such conduct." So saying, he seized a firm hold of the fellow's cloak. The ruffian turned, with a sort of triumphant laugh, grasped Edmund's right arm with his left

hand, while with his right he drew a sword from beneath his cloak, and made a thrust at our unprepared hero. Edmund, however, by a single fortunate effort, disengaged himself, evaded the first thrust, drew his sword, and intercepted the second. The villain made another and another stroke, each of which our hero parried with equal success ; when, the now infuriated ruffian, with a sudden leap backward and bound forward, made a direct lunge at the breast of his intended victim ; which, as our hero at the instant dexterously sprang aside, came with such force on the trunk of the tree, in front of which he had stood but the second before, that the sword of his ferocious assailant was shattered to the very hilt.

Edmund, now resting the point of his weapon on the ground, commanded the man, whom he considered in no condition to resist, being disarmed, to return with him to the Castle.

For reply, the juggler drew a pistol from the belt beneath his cloak, and, thrusting it close to our hero's face, fired ! The steadiness of the ruffian's hand must have been previously shaken by the force with which his sword had struck against the trunk of the tree ; for the lighting charge shot perpendicularly upwards, like a sky-rocket. Throwing the pistol from him, and cursing it aloud, the villain drew out the second, levelled it better, and was in the act of pulling the trigger, when Edmund, by this time more on his guard, had the presence of mind to strike its muzzle aside with his sword. The balls flew through the trees, wide of the intended aim. The juggler stood a moment confounded, then eyed Edmund's raised arm, as if meditating a dart at it, with the desperate purpose of possessing himself of the weapon it held. But the threatening position of the blade seemed to deter him, while, the noise of the shots having arrested

the attention of the nearest group of merry-makers, their flambeaux were seen, by their quick movements, to express instant alarm, crossing and recrossing each other in great confusion. Then, they separated in every possible direction, resembling wandering meteors through the surrounding darkness ; while each moving star was accompanied by a voice, crying, "Thieves ! thieves ! thieves !" as they evidently approached, guided by Edmund's directing call, to the spot on which he stood.

The hitherto determined ruffian now turned and fled. Edmund pursued, and was at first so close behind him, that he again laid hold of the villain's cloak, which, however, now yielded itself a too easy captive ; while its owner darted round a thick clump of wood, and was seen no more. All who came up of course assisted in the pursuit or rather search, but in vain. From the moment the fugitive was first lost sight of, no one knew in what direc-

tion to seek him. Some suggested that he had most probably turned back, favoured by the shelter of the trees, and throwing off such of his disguises as might lead to a recognition of his person, joined the throng of his own pursuers. Indeed, the multitude of people on the grounds at the time was so great, that to have traced among them an unknown individual, and in the dark too, was a thing so totally out of the range of possibility, that the idea was soon given up. On the part of Edmund, certainly, with infinite regret, for he was very unwilling to resign the not irrational hope he had for a short time entertained of discovering something of his own mysterious fate ; even by finding out who had an interest in his destruction. A very little reflection, however, served to convince him, that any further attempt at pursuit must be perfectly vain ; for if the villain were even seized, how was he to be identified ? no one had seen him

unmasked, and the very proportions of his figure had been concealed by his juggler's robes. Much disappointed, therefore, our hero bent his steps towards the Castle, which the alarm had not yet reached.

CHAPTER XXVII.

. . . . "The author of that crime,
Inconceivable—is he my father?"

EDMUND, on his return to the ball room, made the best of his way, scarcely conscious what he did, to the very spot he had left; where, fixing his eyes again on the same object on which he had been gazing when called away by the juggler, he fell into a profound reverie. "What could have been the motive of the violence offered him? To whom could his existence—to whom could his destruction be of so much importance? He was not then too contemptible to have enemies!" A strange sensation, approaching to satisfaction, accompanied the thought.

The bustle attendant on changing partners, reminded him that Julia was engaged to him for the next set; he put in his claim, and was soon recalled to a sense of pleasure, for Julia was leaning on his arm. A shudder followed, however, as he thought of the mysterious words of the ruffian stranger. Again and again he told himself that they had been uttered but to throw him off his guard. While the villain spoke, had not his eye been ever watchful? had not his hand grasped the drawn sword beneath his cloak? evidently awaiting a moment of excited feeling, to strike the blow the more securely. But this solution of the affair, rational and just as it was, did not suffice to set his mind at rest. Might he not be connected with Julia's family in some way as disgraceful to himself as fatal to his mad attachment? Might not some secret agent have been in consequence employed to put an end to his miserable existence, lest he should entail

disgrace and crime on all connected with him ? There were then beings connected with him ! Who were those beings ? and where were they ? A thought of horror next crossed his mind : could it have been a parent who had employed the murderer's hand, to blot out shame with blood ? and his heart shrunk from a surmise too dreadful to be dwelt upon.

It had been previously arranged that the dance now about to commence was to take place in another apartment. The couples accordingly set out ; Julia and Edmund led their own party, while before, behind, and on either side, moved a consolidated crowd in the same direction ; so that retreat from the relative position once taken up was quite out of the question. Our hero and heroine were, consequently, obliged to keep, for a considerable time, a very painful situation in the immediate rear of a talkative party, who, without once looking behind them, proceeded with the following dialogue.

"We seem to abound in naval characters to-night," observed a gentleman.

"You know it is quite a naval affair," said a naval officer.

"True ; commemoration of the battle of _____."

"The day is worth remembering, sir !"

"Is Lord Fitz-Ullin here to-night ?"

"No, but Captain Montgomery is, I understand."

"Which is Captain Montgomery ?" cried a lady.

"Which is Captain Montgomery ?" said a second lady.

"Who is Captain Montgomery ?" with emphasis on the word *who*, said a third lady, who was, by her own size and weight, making way for two slim little girls, her daughters, who, by the pressure of the crowd, were squeezed into the fat sides of their mother, like the offshoots of a bulbous root.

“That is a question not so easily answered,” replied an equally fat gentleman.

“Is he any relation of Lord Fitz-Ullin’s?” enquired some one.

“None whatever,” replied an elderly naval officer, dryly.

“Lord Fitz-Ullin, then, was merely his patron?” said a young naval officer. “Merely,” resumed the elder, “and one half the talent and spirit, shown by Captain Montgomery, would have ensured to any young man Fitz-Ullin’s favour: he is quite enthusiastic about the service.”

“Fitz-Ullin was a very gay fellow in his youth,” observed a corpulent gentleman, “and Captain Montgomery being of unknown origin, may, after all, be no very distant relation of his lordship’s.”

“Very improbable!” rejoined the elder officer, “Fitz-Ullin would give one half his paternal estates for such a son, even in the way to which you allude.”

“His lordship has a son?”

“Yes, but Ormond, though a good-natured fellow, is quite unfit for his profession.”

“Strange that, too!” puffed out the corpulent gentleman, “for he is strikingly like his father.”

“There are some officers on before us,” said one of the young ladies, “I wonder is Captain Montgomery among them!” “I quite long to see him, I understand he is so handsome,” said a third lady. “He seems to be a general favourite with the ladies,” said the younger officer: “he is to be married shortly, I hear, to Lady Susan Morven: luck that! she has fifty thousand, I’m told.” “To Lady Julia L——, I have heard,” interposed the elder officer. “I beg your pardon,” said the fat lady, “Lady Julia L—— is to be married immediately to the Marquis of H——.” “A more suitable match, no doubt,” replied the elder officer; “but heiresses will sometimes please themselves, you know; and I have

heard, that Lady Julia L—— has been attached to Captain Montgomery from her infancy ; and that she is determined to marry him in spite of all her friends, as soon as she shall be of age.” Just at this particular moment, Edmund found the impelling torrent press so weightily against his fair companion, that it was absolutely imperative upon him to draw her closer to himself than she had been.

“And Lord L——’s great estates,” added the younger officer, “must go between his daughters, at his death, whoever they marry ; so the gallant Captain knows what he is about, it seems.”

“He is accustomed to capturing rich prizes!” said the corpulent gentleman. A laugh followed this most original piece of wit.

“The friends,” interposed the plump lady, “can never consent to a young woman of her high connexions, throwing herself away upon a mere soldier of fortune.”

“ I have always understood,” observed another gentleman, “ that Lady Julia L—— was engaged to her cousin, Mr. St. Aubin. Indeed I had it from one who, I think, said that he had it from St. Aubin himself; or, at least, that St. Aubin admitted it.”

All this passed among a group, who, though masked, evidently knew each other. Their arrival at the apartment they had been all this time imperceptibly approaching, and the consequent spreading of the crowd, at length enabled Julia and Edmund to hasten from the vicinity of the party, which had so long annoyed them. Edmund, notwithstanding his causes for abstraction, was aroused by topics so interesting; he thought of the strange aside speeches of Henry, during the mummerly of the juggler, and longed to know how Julia would treat the subject of her supposed engagement to her cousin. As to what had been said of himself, he dare not allude to it, he dare not

even think of it. At length he ventured to whisper a sort of introductory sentence, in the shape of an unmeaning compliment, saying—“How enviable a lot would Henry’s be, if there were any truth in the surmises of those people !” Julia blushed, but made no reply. So absurd a report did not seem to require contradiction ; and, as she was too innocent to think any compliment of Edmund’s unmeaning, his implied question was lost in the pleasure of hearing him say, that to be preferred by her would be an enviable lot ; nor did she perceive that her silence and her blush had at least surprised, if not alarmed him.

The dance now commenced, and put an end to conversation. It concluded, and Edmund, as he led Julia out of the set, began to say something about the necessity he should be under, of leaving Arandale the next morning at a very early hour ; in pursuance of the journey, which was this morning so agreeably

interrupted. At this moment Julia's hand was claimed by Lord K——.

Previous to sitting down to supper, the whole assembly assumed an appearance of uninterrupted splendour. Every coarse or unbecoming disguise, was exchanged for its very opposite of elegance, or magnificence; every one being determined to look as well as possible unmasked. The young lady who cried primroses, proved to be the first public singer of the day; the remainder of the group of flower girls, the rest of the best set, engaged by Lord Arandale for the occasion. They performed, during supper, some of the best scenes of a favourite opera. A ballet followed, led by the pert miss of the wheelbarrow, who was an excellent dancer.

Those, however, who best knew the Earl, could perceive, notwithstanding the efforts he made to entertain his company, that during this evening of unparalleled gaiety and splen-

dour, there was a slight shade of melancholy on his brow ; and a tendency, while he sat at supper, to that, scarcely observable, movement of the head, before mentioned.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

“ To the lake with this ; and, here, take some of these :
 And mingle some that grow upon the brink,
 And mar the sod. I’ll bear the body hence.”

. “ He is cold—Oh, he is dead !”

FOR once the bagpipes were not played under the windows of Arandale Castle at ten ; indeed it was nearer twelve when the well known sounds were heard.

Yet late as was the hour, Edmund did not appear at the breakfast table.

His adventure of the night before with the ruffian who had obtained admittance in the disguise of a juggler, having been mentioned by Lord Arandale to Lady Arandale ; by her Ladyship to Mrs. Morven ; by Mrs. Morven

to the General ; by the people on the grounds, who had witnessed a part of the business, to all the servants ; and by the servants to their respective masters and mistresses, it was now universally talked of. By those we mean, who could talk ; some there were, who could not trust their lips with the utterance of a single syllable. Who could thus desire the amiable Edmund's destruction, baffled all conjecture.

There was but one rational supposition, the Earl said. The villain must have been employed by some one acquainted with those concealed facts, which had hitherto surrounded their young friend's fate with mystery ; some one whose interest would materially suffer by the development of that mystery ; while at the same time there was most probably some event about to take place, which threatened to produce that development.

“ Then, Edmund must be still in danger ! ” exclaimed Frances, starting upright from her

seat, and clasping her hands. Julia sat trembling, and as pale as death ; but neither moved nor spoke. The butler entered with rolls. He was asked if he could be certain that no one had been admitted without a ticket. He was quite certain ! He had, himself, taken the ticket of each person who passed the first hall. Even the little pedlar had presented a card, which, happening to be of similar dimensions to the tickets, he, the butler, unfortunately, had not examined at the time ; and which, when examined afterwards, proved to be one belonging to the man's shop in Bath. This was the only ticket which was not correct, of the full number issued. It was strange ! Tickets had not been given to any friends to give to friends of theirs ; with the exception of a very few to Edmund himself, and to Henry, for naval officers of their acquaintance.

When the subject had been thus discussed, in all its bearings, the Earl, who still looked

serious, and even melancholy, said, "I am not sorry that Captain Montgomery has taken Arthur with him ; it would have been a sad scene for the poor little fellow ! Our friend, Sir Archibald Oswald," he added, after a solemn pause, and looking round the company, "is no more ! The state of his mind will, I trust, acquit him in the eyes of heaven, as it undoubtedly must in the judgment of men ; but, there is reason to fear that our unhappy friend has been accessory to his own death. His body was yesterday found in the lake by the work people who were preparing for the illuminations. Duncan very properly suppressed the circumstance, till he had communicated it privately to me ; and I judged it best to permit the entertainment offered to our friends to proceed, without checking the pleasure of the company by the introduction of so melancholy a subject.

Miss Morven thought that Mr. St. Aubin

was certainly a very amiable young man : he showed so much feeling. He actually turned quite pale, when her uncle mentioned, Sir Archibald's body being found in the lake.

Many of course were the exclamations of pity and surprise. "It will be quite a change of scene," continued the Earl, "I must send for the proper persons; and, if their verdict is, as I have no doubt it will be, insanity, I must give my poor friend a suitable funeral."

CHAPTER XXIX.

“ Each fiercely grapples with his foe.”

. “ Have I then murder’d thee !”

To account for Sir Archibald Oswald’s disappearance from Arandale, and the subsequent discovery of his body in the lake, we must accompany him in a walk before breakfast, on the morning after he had evinced so much emotion the previous evening ; first of a furious description, when Henry’s voice arrested his attention ; and finally, of a tender and subdued nature, when, on hearing Julia sing, all violence had not only been allayed, but, unconscious tears had flowed over his haggard countenance.

Having retired without supper, and, consequently, without the excess in wine, which, with him, too frequently formed the principal part of that meal, the unhappy Oswald slept better than was his custom. He rose earlier ; he felt some degree of composure ; a lucid interval was probably approaching.

He wandered into the deep woods that surround Arandale Castle. The solitude they afforded was of a cheering and animated kind. Stately deer crossed his path ; birds sang, and peacocks screamed in every branch, and the cawing rooks were, as usual, in busy motion, in and over the tops of all the high old trees.

The path he chanced to take, led him to the sheet of water before noticed. Our old acquaintances, the two swans, were slowly sailing on its calm surface. Half the quiet bosom of the lake was in deep shadow from the great trees, which seemed resting the weight of their branches upon it. The other half shone brightly

in the early sun ; and every leaf, every blade of grass, which, amid so much cover, the rays of light could reach, was glittering with dew. The morning air was exhilarating. Oswald's broken heart felt soothed by the influence of surrounding objects. He stood contemplating the scene with calmer feelings than were common to him. There was a peculiar stillness in the moment ; the next, the sound of approaching footsteps fell on his ear. He looked round, and beheld, as he believed, one who had long been the object of his search, and of his hatred, coming towards him.

Oswald stamped on the earth, uttered a yell, at once of triumph and defiance. His eyes flashed with the fire of phrenzy ; he gnashed his teeth ; his whole countenance became distorted with the horrible rage of a maniac. Henry paused ! for it was, indeed, this unfortunate son of a desperate father, whom the bewildered perceptions of the madman had mis-

taken for that father. A father whose very memory could thus entail on his offspring, not only the wild vengeance of others, but almost a necessity in himself to become the perpetrator of crime, actual, if not intentional.

Henry saw, and endeavoured to avoid Oswald ; but the unhappy being crossed his path, and seized on his throat with violence, reiterating, “ Villain ! villain ! villain ! ” accusing him of deeds of the blackest dye, and calling upon him with threats and imprecations to restore the rights of his son ! At first Henry, to do him justice, only sought to escape ; next, only to defend himself : but when it became evident that the maniac’s purpose was to put him to death, and that, with that purpose, was coupled an insane glee at the immediate prospect of its fulfilment ; and that, added to all this, Henry began to feel himself actually threatened with strangulation ; his own angry passions kindled, and he put his strength to the struggle. Os-

wald, however, having at first fastened on Henry's cravat, maintained his hold with the ferocious tenacity of a bull-dog, and pursued his advantage with the supernatural force derived from phrenzy. There were moments when Henry gave himself up for lost ! It was now that he forgot his assailant's age and imbecility of mind, and with all the strength of youthful sinews clasped his arms round the old man's waist, and, in a few seconds, brought him to the ground. Here the sight of Oswald's grey hairs lying amid the grass and fallen leaves might have recalled better feelings ; but even here the poor maniac's fury was unabated : his countenance still expressed his horrible intention, and his hand still grasped the cravat of Henry. In the latter the instinct of self-preservation grew each moment more fierce.

The efforts of Oswald, even in this prostrate position, continued for a time as frantic as ever. When, suddenly, all became still : the

hands had relaxed their hold, and Henry gazed in mute horror and unavailing remorse on a passive—nay, a lifeless form!—himself as motionless.

“Self-defence is not murder!” he at length murmured. “Self-defence is not murder!” he repeated. But no false arguments could stifle the shocking conviction to which his suddenly cooled faculties had awakened. The conviction that a too fatal fierceness had accompanied the pressure with which he had held the fallen madman to the earth after immediate danger to himself had ceased. The vital breath, suspended by wild excitement and frantic exertion, might have, would have returned had not that cruelly continued pressure impeded the efforts of nature.

Such feelings, however, shortly yielded to a dread of the consequences of what had happened; attended thus by, at least, very suspicious circumstances.

He stood up, and looked all round him. It was solitude everywhere ; and Oswald's hat had rolled into the lake. He seized the thought, drew the body towards the margin, and pushed it in also.

It sunk, and the water closed over it. Henry gazed on the spot whence it had disappeared, till the last spreading circle had melted away ; then, turned to depart. But, started and shuddered on beholding full, attentive eyes fixed upon him, as it were observing his movements ! For a moment, he felt detected ; but the next, recovered from his panic, for the eyes were only those of a stately deer. The animal stood at a little distance, beneath a tree ; his face turned full round, his head proudly erect, sustaining the weight of his branching horns.

Henry envied him ! And now striking hastily into a walk, that led towards the Castle, he debated with himself, in great agitation, whether he should mention what had happened to

Lord Arandale, pleading the dreadful necessity of self-defence, against a maniac, who would else have taken his life ; or, whether he should remain silent, and suffer it to be supposed that Oswald had drowned himself. That such a man should commit an act of suicide could not surprise any one, and Henry, therefore, determined on the latter alternative.

It was on this occasion that he entered the breakfast-room on the first morning of the races, just as Lady Arandale was enquiring of the butler, if any one had been in Sir Archibald's room. It was at this breakfast that Lady Susan had observed on Henry's not having any appetite.

It may now too be imagined what his feelings of consternation must have been, when, within an hour after, little Arthur, mistaking him for Edmund, laid hold of the side of his coat, and asked him, in a cautious whisper, where his poor papa was.

The body of Sir Archibald Oswald, over which we have seen the peaceful surface of the waters close, rose again at the usual time. But before any one had chanced to visit a place so sequestered, both it and the hat had been gently borne along towards a narrow outlet, at the further end of the lake, and received into the strait, or pass, which was too confined to allow of their further progress.

And here they might still have lain, had not the work people, mentioned by the Earl, found it necessary to clear this pass.

ERRATA.

VOL. I.

- Page 105, Line 14, *for* "claim to the attribute," *read* "claim to be the attribute."
 — 115, — 2, *for* "but bestows," *read* "but to bestow."
 — 126, — 16, *for* "There the wife," *read* "These the wife."
 — 159, — 5, *for* "comeb ene," *read* "come bene."
 — 160, — 13, *for* "wha was," *read* "wha wad."
 — 162, — 7, *for* "she was doon-lying," *read* "she was at the doon-lying."
 — 238, — 10, *for* "dirk and threw," *read* "dirk threw."
 — 269, — 2, *for* "port, but before," *read* "port before."
 — 274, — 13, *for* "over three," *read* "over board three."
 — 286, — 3, *for* "animate," *read* "an innate."
 — 295, — 16, *for* "feed on," *read* "feed with."
 — 315, — 3, *for* "In the next," *read* "For the next."
 — 325, — In the motto, *for* "Ingall," *read* "Fingall."
 — 341, — 9, *for* "lef," *read* "left."
 — 342, — 20, *for* "fiends," *read* "fiend."

VOL. II.

- Page 17, Line 3, *for* "laugn," *read* "laugh, it."
 — 62, — 6, *for* "Gentlemen!" *read* "Julia."
 — 200, — 8, *for* "stop all," *read* "strip all."
 — 243, — 6, *for* "beauty o," *read* "beauty of."
 — 261, — 3, *for* "hey," *read* "they."
 — 269, — 2, *for* "Misses," *read* "Messrs."
 — 276, — 15, *for* "ne mar," *read* "ne war."
 — 299, — 14, *for* "frigate in question," *read* "frigate."
 — 300, — 17, *for* "me from out," *read* "me out."

VOL. III.

- Page 12, Line 2, *for* "the sigh expressed," *read* "tho' expressed."
 — 32, — 8, *for* "chrelins," *read* "cluelines."
 — 79, — 13, *for* "perverted word," *read* "world."
 — 99, — 2, *for* "them," *read* "him."
 — 112, — 1, *for* "prevailed to," *read* "prevailed on to."
 — 181, — 6, *for* "There was," *read* "This was."
 — 185, — 12, *for* "every time," *read* "every day."
 — 201, — 4, *for* "rising," *read* "rose."
 — 202, — 1, *for* "traversed on the," *read* "traversed the."
 — 204, — 18, *for* "heroine impelled by her," *read* "heroine and her."
 — 226, — 4, *for* "one half," *read* "remit one half."
 — 230, — 14, *for* "disclosures had been made?" *read* "disclosure had been made under almost any other circumstances?"
 — 254, — 21, *for* "ou hene," *read* "our heroine."
 — 375, — 16, *for* "safety had," *read* "safety which had."
 — 377, — 3, *for* "tooked," *read* "took."
 — 403, — 13, *for* "outlaw of," *read* "outlaw with."





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